

Megiddo Message

March 15, 1958

Vol. 45, Nos. 5, 6



*"And he shall reign ~~~ forever
and of his kingdom there
shall be no end ~~~"*



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March 15, 1958 Vol. 45. Nos. 5, 6

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD
THE GREAT APOSTASY
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?
HELL AND THE DEVIL
SPIRITUAL CREATION
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE SABBATH
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This Issue

This issue of the MEGIDDO MESSAGE is a combination of our True Christmas, New Year, Passover, and Easter numbers, the dates of the events occurring as follows:

True Christmas and the New Year
March 21
Passover April 1
Easter April 4

As these events are so close together we feel it most appropriate to present evidence and other thoughts pertaining to these events in one issue. We hope you will find it interesting, enjoyable, and an assistance in rendering the honor due our Saviour.

Extra copies of this issue are available at 15 cents each.

The next issue will be dated April 5.

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IN COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTH
OF CHRIST

MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH

Thursday Evening, March 20, 7:30

OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

A dramatic study of the lives of six Bible characters. Its lesson is the glory of God's *second chance*. From unpromising and even hopeless beginnings, men have risen and may yet

rise to the heights of character and achievement, by the power of faith and the help of the Eternal.

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." —Eccl. 7:8.

Morning Devotional Service,
March 21, 8:00

Dinner in Church Dining Room,
12:30

Friday Evening, April 12, 7:30
A quiet hour of reflection and resolve.

"He Shall Reign"

*Serenely shines against yon starry sky,
Like a rainbow of love and peace,
The glowing promise that Christ shall one day reign
Causing wars and strife to cease.*

IN AWE and wonder, we have sometime beheld a rainbow in a threatening sky. How such a natural phenomenon pulls at our heartstrings and brings us into a closer touch with our Creator!

There is no mystery about a rainbow. It is a natural occurrence, appearing in that part of a storm-laden sky which is opposite the sun. It appears only when the sun shines and while the rain or heavy mist is still falling. Passing through the rain-drops, the rays of the sun are refracted in such a way as to produce the colorful arch. As a rule such a phenomenon bespeaks the end of the storm.

Throughout all the fabric of Jewish history there was woven a rainbow cord of hope, a joyous note of anticipation that a Redeemer would come to right all earth's wrongs. All the patriarchs, yes, and all the prophets from Moses onward spoke of a great One to come. Jacob spoke of the Messiah as Shiloh, which was to come; Balaam prophesied of a "scepter" that would arise in Israel; Moses comforted his people with the thought that God would raise up a prophet like unto himself; the sweet psalmist gave us a golden treasury filled with rainbow promises of a King who would rule on earth with charity and equity. And though they knew it was not to come for long centuries of time and no matter how dark and dismal their horizon, a few took heart and gloried in One that should come who was to rule in true judgment and mercy. And in glorying, they purified their lives and became ready for the time that was to come.

At length the Saviour came. Not as men expected Him to come, but He came nevertheless. When the darkness in men's hearts was the blackest and degradation the deepest, the Messiah was born in a manger. On Judean hills, angels came to proclaim the glad news to shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. They told the glad story of a babe that was born who would one day bring peace on earth and good will to men.

Then, in God's appointed time and according to His plan, the Messiah came to His people as a zealous preacher, full of ardor, fervor and enthusiasm for what was right. Though cherishing Messianic hopes, the Jewish nation had been interpreting His coming in colors of their own imagination. They had anchored their faith to the hope of a Deliverer coming on their own terms and expectations. They expected Him to come and by irresistible force free their nation from servitude and raise it to the utmost worldly grandeur. Considering themselves the chosen people, they had hoped to be allotted high places in the new coming Kingdom. All the spiritual elements of true holiness and perfection that were to characterize the better times were lost and overshadowed in their minds

by the dazzling dreams of material glory.

One might have expected to find Israel as a nation so saturated with the hopes of a Saviour and so inspired with the visions from former prophets that they would have been ready to give Him their wholehearted loyalty and enthusiastic co-operation. Instead of finding Israel mature in holiness and consecrated in goodness and mercy, ready to bless with Him the surrounding nations, He was confronted with the difficult task of proclaiming a reformation among the chosen people of God. He found them unprepared. He had come at a time when shallowness prevailed and wickedness in high places was festering under the name of piety and religion. So bitter were they against the shame of their national slavery, they did not perceive in themselves the gradual lapse from the high ideal of God's standard.

To reform God's people as a nation Christ had first to teach them individual heart-transformation. The great work before Him was to tear away the prejudices and outward forms of piety that had accumulated in their lives through the centuries of degradation. By example, he taught them brotherly kindness, fairness, compassion and uprightness. With undaunted courage He denounced iniquity wherever He found it, in rich or poor. Because His righteousness testified against their wickedness, they disowned their Messiah and rejected Him. Nevertheless, God's purposes are not to be altered by mere men. God's promise still holds true, ". . . He shall reign."

Throughout the types and shadows of God's laws, there has always been that arched Messianic hope with the undertone and overtone of a holier living, and it has reached our age, the "latter days." We too live in an age of worrisome and troublesome days, and men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming upon the earth. Already storm clouds are darkening our dim horizon, but we have that comforting promise that "He shall reign."

Let us remember, our King has challenged us to get ready for rulership. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3: 21). He would come today and make us co-rulers with Him, but are we ready? Has the last vestige of carnality been torn out of our hearts? As the body of Christ, are we ready for rulership because we have first learned to rule ourselves?

In a dark world, a stormy world, let the Christ-likeness infuse us with new determination to put away all that defiles. The sun of righteousness can only reflect the hidden colors of its rays through the distilled dew of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness and meekness. It cannot, it will not penetrate the downpour of carnality, anger, wrath, strife, malice and harsh judgments. Not while we cherish any degree of wrong will the sunlight of Truth shine upon our storm clouds and arch a rainbow in our sky.

The Beatitudes



JESUS "seeing the multitude"—yes, He *saw* them. More than that, He *knew* the deepest yearnings of their hearts, as He knows yours and mine today. He saw them gathered to Him—tax-gatherers, fishermen, merchantmen, carpenters, soldiers, widows, mothers, shepherds, young men and maidens, the high and low, rich and poor. But He knew and experienced something they did not know—something they lacked. He possessed something they did not have and it was His desire to impart that knowledge to them. "And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain: . . . and he opened his mouth and taught them."

The first word that fell from His lips was "Blessed." Eagerly they fastened their eyes upon Him—blessedness, happiness—how did He know that was what they wanted above all things? But why had happiness eluded them, that blessed state for which they longed? Was real happiness after all only a passing fancy, mocking them time after time with sorrow, regret and bitter tears? But here Jesus was saying "blessed"—not just once nor thrice, but the first "blessed" was one of an octave of beatitudes. Jesus was revealing a new path to happiness, an amazing road that left them bewildered and spell-bound. They could not comprehend the deeper meaning of His words then, nor can we today or shall we till we walk with Him each league of the shining way to true happiness.

In these eight beatitudes Jesus has left us the secret of His joy and peace and they remain as a guide to all those who have the hardihood to follow those laws.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The first step to this state of blessedness is poverty of spirit or detachment, as it were, from earthly, material things. We naturally feel that property, wealth, position are essential to our happiness. We strive for this goal and that in hope of adding joy to our lives. We want certain individuals for our friends, thinking they will cause us to be really happy. We may follow all these inclinations and feel we are enjoying them to the full, only to experience bitter sorrow in the loss of a friend or loved companion or if some misfortune should knock at our door. God has chosen the poor and will make them

happy. The Apostle James described this blessedness when he said: "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

We learn from this that the possession of worldly goods or social position do not of themselves make a man happy. Happiness comes only as we detach ourselves from material desires and affections and attach our highest affections to God, allowing Him first place in our heart and possessing the things of this world and creatures in this world only for God, never exalting them above God. Not that we can be happy in poverty and want of all things. God knew we needed material things and the love and aid of our friends and companions; but we find the highest joy in these things only because we love God above all else. He remains when material things are swept away.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

There is a mourning, as for an only son, loss of all things held dear. Disappointment brings mourning. War, strife and commotion cause lamentation and bitter sorrow. But the mourning which moves God to pity His children is that which rends the very heart because of iniquity. Mourning and repentance are inseparable. A heart broken because sin was found there finds compassion in the heart of God. To such He gives comfort and promises them happiness when evil has been washed from the heart by godly repentance.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Would we be meek? Then we must be humble. Meekness is a strong word. A meek man is a man of strength, too strong to yield to pride and arrogance; too strong to yield to the wiles of the flesh, but meek and humble enough to yield as clay in the hand of the Divine Potter. God reveals Himself to the meek, they are His friends and He is theirs.

A meek man does not seek glory and honor for himself but for God and His cause. He is patient and longsuffering with the weakness of his brother. He seeks not self-aggrandizement or honor for himself but for God and he in turn is honored by God. He is quiet and self-possessed but

is ablaze with energy and zeal when the cause of right is assailed and the weak suffer unjustly. Unrighteousness stands in fear and awe in the presence of meekness. A person who has this inner quality of humility can never be moved by the storm and stress of life. He trusts in God and abides steadfast, enjoying the blessings of God.

Meekness is the highest type of strength; it is a living quality for it grows in strength. Meekness is strength held in reserve against the day of adversity when the weak, halfhearted ones shall fall, but the meek still stand and shall inherit the earth!

The fourth beatitude in the ascending scale of happiness has to do with one's dominant aim in life. Find out what impels and motivates you and you will find out whether a state of divine blessedness awaits you or not. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

There are many goals in life which man may pursue, but there is only one goal which one may pursue and find at the end true happiness. Righteousness is holy and upright character. It is a state of justice and integrity. God did not mean for prophet and priest only to follow after the goal of righteousness, for it is indeed the only worthwhile goal for every man and woman upon earth. But herein lies the awful truth of the matter: true peace and happiness, that blessed state that could be enjoyed by mankind, is unknown by the masses and dwells in a very few. "When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?" But righteousness is something to hunger and thirst after, for it is a holy and beautiful thing. It will beautify its possessor with a blameless character. Such a person will first of all love God with all his mind, might and strength and will love his neighbor as himself. All other goals and ambitions will be merged into that highest of all goals, to do all things that please the Father. He in turn shall satisfy their hungering souls with the fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11).

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

How many have desired mercy for themselves! How few have given it to others! Mercy is a predominant characteristic of God Himself. Sin is never condoned by God, but He "remembers our frame, that we are dust." And upon such He shows mercy, sending His rain upon the just as well as the unjust. God stands for justice, but justice, to be so, must join equally with mercy. With forgiveness of wrong doing comes a peace that assuages revenge. If we would obtain mercy for ourselves we must endeavor to keep our hearts free from the desire of personal revenge. "With what measure ye mete it shall be meted to you again."

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

How shall we accurately describe the sincerity, the single hearted simplicity that pureness implies? It means absolute freedom from guilt and sin. It is clear sunlight with no shadows intermingled. A pure life is one in perfect accord with God—in tune with its Maker. Where purity reigns, God sits enthroned, and His hand is seen in every affair and circumstance of life. A pure life can never be an unhappy life, and at last the path of the pure leads to the Presence of God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

The nations cannot find peace because they have not found the Prince of Peace. But it is necessary for the individual to find peace before the nations shall find it. Each man must make his own peace with his God. Peace comes in submission, perfect submission to the will of God. Jesus found peace in its fullness in Gethsemane, when He laid the last trace of His own will on the altar—"nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Selfishness brings strife and unrest and bitter frustration to the individual and suspicion and hatred reigns in the heart. It brings war and turmoil to nations. The self-centered person attempts to "use" others for his own advancement. The man who has learned to look on the things of others seeks to advance the cause of righteousness. He loses his own will in God's and enjoys the benediction of peace in his soul, and rests calm and unafraid, knowing that at last God's will shall be done on earth and the angels' song shall at last be a reality: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Jesus knew the world at large would not accept the standard He showed them in His daily life. He came to give love, joy and peace in a world filled with hate, fear and sorrow. He was a warm and shining light in the midst of a cold world of thick darkness. Therefore the world hated Him because He testified that their deeds were evil. But the world could not conquer Him. In what seemed His darkest hour, He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus knew what awaited every one who dared take up his cross and follow Him. The world scorn those who are below their level and hate and despise those who dare live above their standard. Therefore they, being carnal and knowing no other weapon to vent their fury upon the righteous, resort to persecution, both mental and physical, upon those who choose a higher allegiance than the standard of men. But every sorrow endured for the sake of right doing has its promised balm. Jesus' friends have much to endure, but they have much to compensate. The companionship of the Master and the love of the tried and true sustains them and brings the hundredfold of blessing though surrounded by a cold and indifferent world. The everlasting law of supreme love of God and our neighbor is the hub of the eight-spoked wheel of blessedness which revolves and motivates the body of Christ toward their final goal—blessed happiness in the Kingdom of God forever.

If in the new year which lies before us we desire to be blessed of God, the means of securing His blessing is available to us in *The Beatitudes*. As we acquire poverty of spirit, sorrow for sin, lowliness of mind, a deep craving for righteousness, mercy toward the repentant, purity of heart, peace with all true believers, and joy in persecution for righteousness' sake, we shall be the recipients of heaven's choicest blessings. The life thus richly laden with blessings from on high becomes in turn a blessing to its fellow man.

Editorials

WITH the coming of the new year we have come to another milestone on our journey to the City of God. As the old year ends our record is complete. The important question confronting each of us is, How does the record look? A year ago we made promises, and in our secret hearts we know how well we have kept them or to what extent we failed to live up to the goal we set for ourselves. However lofty our resolutions might have been, unless we are deceiving ourselves, we know how well we have done in keeping our promise to God. If our obedience has been 100 per cent we have much reason for rejoicing. If it has been somewhat less but above what it was the previous year we should be encouraged that we are making progress. But if it is less, then we had better think seriously about our position.

Milestones and Resolutions

More than likely most of us have not done all that we purposed, or could have done. For this reason we should be thankful we have come but to a milestone and not to the end of the journey.

Progressive dairy farmers keep a record of each cow's production. Whether good or bad it is set down to her record, and regardless of what befalls her, the record stands. There is no way to erase it. Our deeds are recorded, but God gives us an opportunity to correct our bad performances. By a holy life our past can be obliterated so that it is never mentioned to us again. God's promise is: "When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; . . . he shall surely live, he shall not die. . . . When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby" (Ezek. 33: 14-19).

In our dealings with each other we expect to keep our promises. If a man fails to keep a verbal contract with us, we have no further dealings with him. By comparison how merciful has been the Almighty with us! We have broken our promises but His mercy is still outstretched.

As we make resolutions for another year let us determine not to be slothful, or as he whose word is of no account. Let us act like men and pay our vows, remembering that it is better never to have vowed than to vow and not pay.

We should bear in mind that we are not asked to keep our vows a whole year at a time, but rather only a day at a time. Let us plan and do as much in improving our relationship with God as we expect to do in our business enterprises.

On Deposit for You . . .

- 12 FRESH-MINTED MONTHS
- 52 TREASURED WEEKS
- 365 VALUABLE DAYS
- 8,760 GOLDEN HOURS
- 525,600 PRECIOUS MINUTES
- 31,536,000 PRICELESS SECONDS

BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY, PROSPEROUS NEW YEARFUL OF WELL-INVESTED TIME!

WHEN a man wakes up to the fact that he has a definite part to play in the drama of life, that this span of life is shortening with every clock tick and if he is going to play this part well, he must be at it, at that moment life begins for him, no matter what his age or objective.

The tragedies of life are with those who drift and never discover that life has begun. For them the curtain never rises.

For Better Living

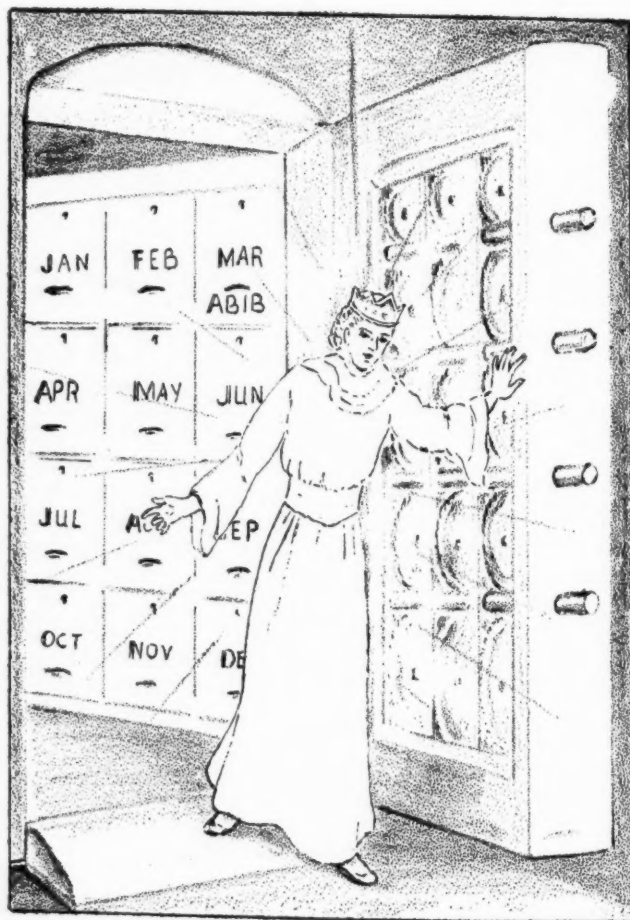
Distance is no longer a serious obstacle due to modern means of travel and transportation. But time remains unconquerable. It cannot be expended, accumulated, mortgaged, hastened or retarded. It is the one thing completely beyond man's control.

We had best accept time as our master. There is nothing to be gained but disappointment if we try to cheat time. It is given to us to use well, or poorly, or indifferently, but once. And in one of these ways we *do* use it, with no second chance.

We have broken the flow of time into years, months, weeks, days, and down to hours and minutes for our convenience. Those people are happiest, most successful, who accept time as invincible, and who feel it their greatest responsibility to put each minute, hour and day, to the best possible use.

A clean, unblotted new year lies ahead, a fresh opportunity for greater accomplishment; a new chance to strive for bigger and happier goals.

Let's not forget the hard-earned lessons of the past year. Let's put this knowledge of what not-to-do-again and what to-do-more-of, to work in the new year. Let's decide we are better fitted than ever before to be successful and happy, and with a renewed determination let us resolve to aspire to greater things, a higher, nobler life, which will be lasting and enduring, time without end.



The Great Apostasy

—or Departure from True Religion—

The Woman with the Golden Cup

IN REVELATION 17 Papal Rome is distinguished as an elegantly dressed woman who is dependent upon a beast for a vehicle to bear her about and promote her activity. This beast which serves as her vehicle is clearly identified by the text as Pagan Rome, "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (17:8). No more descriptive language could be framed. Without controversy Pagan Rome had her day; then she was destroyed, theoretically; yet she lives today, the same old pagan beast in refined guise.

"Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth" (v. 9).

All students know that Rome is built on seven hills. There the woman, or papal power, is seated. Concerning the woman we read:

"There came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (vs. 1, 2).

Nothing is more repugnant to respectable society than a prostitute. And this is the very symbol by which John describes the apostate power: the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. As a purely spiritual dominion, Papacy could never have attained its present status. The "kings of the earth" are symbols of the political powers and governments which constitute the real strength and support of the papal system.

"The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18).

Not only were political powers and governments made to serve the Papacy; she exerted her effect upon mankind at large: "The inhabitants of the earth" were "made drunk with the wine of her fornication." As the result of their long indulgence in the wine of false doctrines, spiritual drunkenness overcame all nations (Isa. 29:9).

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (v. 4).

The costliness of her attire signifies her vanity; the color, the regal authority which she assumed. By contrast, the simple clothing of the bride of Christ is "fine linen, clean and white . . . the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8).

The golden cup which she (the whore) held represents the Bible, the pure gold. The cup is all right, but in her hands it no longer contained the simple doctrines of Christ. She emptied out the truth and filled it with her false doctrines, the dregs of her fornication. She made it appear to teach many things for which not a word of proof can be found in the words of the prophets, Jesus, or the apostles.

And upon her forehead was a name written, "MYSTERY" (verse 5).

Jesus' name is called "The Word of God" (Rev. 19:13).

In contrast to the mysteries of error, this name is "plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge" (Prov. 8:9), and is written in the foreheads of the faithful (Rev. 14:1).

The mysteries which were evolved in the mind of this woman, which are written all over her elaborate system, and which have woven their magical spell upon the world at large, are myriad. For centuries the Church held the Bible away from its parishioners on the theory that the Book was a mystery, and could be interpreted only by the clergy. Furthermore, the Catholic Catechism states that the teaching of the "trinity," which all must believe to be saved, is an "incomprehensible incomprehensibility." Ask any Catholic prelate a question on any simple statement of Scripture, the plain meaning of which militates against a tenet of the Church, and he will promptly answer: "Brother, don't pry into that; it is a great mystery."

The Prophet Daniel predicted that this Roman power would "alter the sacred seasons" (7:25, Moffatt). The fulfillment of this prophecy has contributed much to the religious confusion which prevails everywhere. For instance, Is the week between December 25th and January

1st B. C., or is it A. D.? Here is a mystery which the keenest of intellects cannot solve.

All time before Christ's birth is B. C.; all time after, A. D.; and yet we have a week between Christmas and the beginning of the new year which is neither B. C. nor A. D. Furthermore, Christ's birth is celebrated at a time of the year when roads are impassable in Palestine, and when it would have been impossible for Joseph and especially Mary, in her condition, to reach Bethlehem. Nor would an enrollment and taxation have been ordered by Augustus Caesar at a time when travel was impossible. According to the familiar narrative, Christ's birth was announced by angels to the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night on the Judean hillsides; but sheep are not to be found in the open pastures between November and March. All of which is to say that none of the circumstances of the occasion can be made to conform to the December date.

The chain of Bible evidence which establishes the correct beginning of the year and the birth of Christ is simple, direct:

1. Moses established the first month of the year to be Abib (Ex. 12:2, 3; 13:4) which means "sprouting month; month of green ears, beginning with the new moon of April or March."

2. Israel observed the month Abib, as commanded (Deut. 16:1).

3. It was a custom of the family of David to assemble at Bethlehem, the "city of David," to keep the New Moon Feast (I Sam. 20:5, 6).

4. As descendants of the family of David, Mary and Joseph had gone to Bethlehem to observe the New Moon Feast of Abib when Christ was born.

Obviously the birth of Christ was a spring occasion because Joseph and Mary were present in Bethlehem at the

time, according to the custom of all loyal Jews, to observe the Abib festivals (Luke 2: 42).

Nevertheless, the world prefers the mystery of the December date. Why? The history of the origin of December 25 as Christmas Day is intricate and infamous, but to report briefly:

1. December (17—24) was the time of the old Saturnalia, the most vile, immoral feast that ever disgraced Pagan Rome, a season of license, drunkenness and debauchery when all the restraints of law were laid aside.

2. December 25 was observed as the Winter Solstice or birthday of the sun.

3. Also Mithras, whom his followers looked upon as their sun god, was supposedly born at that time.

The Church fathers, upon recognizing the strong appeal of the December festivals for the pagan world, took counsel and decided that they could be retained and Christianized (?) by placing Christ's birth at that time. A writer in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that there is no certainty that Christ was born on December 25, that this day was not among the earliest festivals of the Church; but that in the fifth century the Latin Church, because of tradition, issued a decree that Christ's birth be observed forever on December 25. Even Augustine, in his writings, implies the heathen origin of Christmas.

The same plan of compromise with paganism was fol-

lowed in many other cases: The festival of St. George in April replaced the ancient pagan festival of the Parilia; the festival of St. John the Baptist in June has succeeded to a heathen mid-summer festival of water; the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin in August has ousted the festival of Diana; the feast of All Saints in November is a continuation of an old heathen feast of the dead. These feasts, the historian remarks, were, like Christmas, placed without any reference to the events which they commemorated.

Hippolytus, that famous scholar of the third century, left his testimony on this vital subject engraved upon his tombstone: *I say that Christ was born April 2.*

We have already made mention of the doctrine of transubstantiation, perhaps the most mystical of all doctrines of Catholic theology, in which the bread and wine, by a miraculous process performed by the

The Lord's Supper priest, supposedly become the actual body of Christ. Mystery of all mys-

teries the most incomprehensible! This sacrament of the Eucharist, better known as the Lord's Supper, is observed by Christian Churches in the morning—supper in the morning, if that can be understood. Furthermore, this communion is served quarterly in some churches; others partake monthly; others weekly; when it is expressly stipulated in the Bible to be a yearly observance. Easter is accepted as annual, the Lord's Supper as quarterly or more frequently, when actually both were part of the same event.

The old Passover originated upon the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. It was to be observed upon the evening of the 14th of Abib as a memorial of their deliverance from bondage (Ex. 12: 18; Deut. 16: 1).


Christ instituted the new passover (designated today as the *Lord's Supper*) which He ate with His disciples on the 13th of Abib, "before the [Jews'] feast of the passover" (John 13: 1). This is the observance which is to be perpetuated in the true Church, as decreed by Paul:

"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread . . . also he took the cup. . . As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11: 23—26).

Accepting the authority of Paul which was delegated by Christ Himself, true followers of Christ will partake of the Lord's Supper yearly on the evening of the 13th of Abib, the anniversary of the night when Christ was betrayed. No mystery enshrouds the bread and wine; no change in their form takes place by the blessing of a priest. The bread and wine are simply emblems representing the living bread or the words of life, and the carrying out of that word in our daily lives—the death to sin.

Primitive peoples in all parts of the world have practiced ceremonial cannibalism, in the hope that the virtues of an ancestor or the courage of a slain enemy might be absorbed by eating his flesh or drinking his blood. After all, that's what the papal doctrine of transubstantiation amounts to. However, the nature of the

HOW TO COUNT BIBLE TIME

<p>THIS month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. . . . This day came ye out in the month Abib."—Exodus 12:2, 13:4. As the anniversary of our Lord's birth, the Last Supper with his disciples, and the Resurrection occur on the 13th, 13th and 15th of Abib, we have prepared the following chart with mention of the events that surround the same. Let the reader bear in mind that with Bible time the day is from evening to evening, 6 P. M. to 6 P. M.</p>		
Comparison of the first 15 days of Bible time with corresponding Roman time 1958		
ROMAN TIME	BIBLE TIME	Year begins with first new moon after vernal equinox.
Mar. 1958	Abib First month	New Moon occurs Mar. 20, 9:30, A. M.
Thur. 20	6 P.M.	First day of month is reckoned from following evening, 6 P. M.
Fri. 21	6 P.M.	★ This day is born in the city of David, a Savior, Christ the Lord!
Sat. 22	6 P.M.	1  NEW MOON
Sun. 23	6 P.M.	2 FEAST
Mon. 24	6 P.M.	3
Tue. 25	6 P.M.	4
Wed. 26	6 P.M.	5
Thur. 27	6 P.M.	6
Fri. 28	6 P.M.	7
Sat. 29	6 P.M.	8
Sun. 30	6 P.M.	9
Mon. 31	6 P.M.	10
APRIL 1	6 P.M.	11
Wed. 2	6 P.M.	12
Thur. 3	6 P.M.	13
Fri. 4	6 P.M.	14
		15

food we eat, of which the Passover emblems are symbolic, is defined by Christ:

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6: 57).

This language is plain. Did Jesus live by eating the literal flesh and drinking the literal blood of the Father? The thought is ridiculous. However, this would be no more foolish and absurd than to claim that we must partake of the literal flesh and blood of Jesus. Jesus gained eternal life by eating every word that the Father gave, and in like manner we can gain eternal life by eating every word of Jesus.

The present means of dating Easter is another phase of the mystery which is written upon the forehead of the mother of harlots. As early as the second century, great disputes had arisen among the Christians respecting the proper time of celebrating Easter. The Council of Nicæa ordained that the celebration should thereafter always take place on the Sunday which immediately follows the full moon that happens upon or next after the vernal equinox. How could Easter accurately fall always on Sunday when Bible time is governed by the moon? Furthermore, just what place does this Sun-day hold in the Bible week? The days of the Bible week are distinguished as first day, second day, etc. Nowhere in the Sacred Volume do the names of the Roman week appear. Sun-day was chosen in respect to the worshipers of the sun god, Monday for the worshipers of the moon, and so on through the week. The women who discovered the open sepulcher "upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning" (Luke 24: 1) would be surprised to be informed that that was Easter Sunday. In fact, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* states that in the times of the early Christians the Easter festival followed the Passover feast "entirely irrespective of the day of the week."

Christ's Resurrection on the 15th of Abib (the day following the Jewish Passover and Sabbath) is verified by the Bible account:

We read in Matthew 26: 1, 2, "He said unto his disciples, ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." The Jewish Passover was always observed on Abib 14, as Moses decreed (Ex. 12: 18); this was Abib 12, two days before. We read further, "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, *Not on the feast day*, lest there be an uproar among the people." The Jews were determined to accomplish their terrible deed *before the feast of the Passover*.

We read further, "Now [before] the first*

day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve" (vs. 17-20).

This narrative had its beginning two days before the Jews' feast, on the 12th of Abib; in the evening Jesus partook of the Passover. Since Bible time is reckoned from evening to evening (Lev. 23: 32), the day had changed to the 13th when Jesus met with His disciples. That same evening, supper being ended, and Jesus having resorted to the Mount of Olives, He was betrayed by Judas, brought before Caiaphas the high priest, and denied by Peter. The following morning (still the 13th of Abib) He was delivered to Pontius Pilate, sent to Herod who returned Him to Pilate; and Pilate, after vainly pleading with His persecutors, delivered Jesus into the hands of the mob. About the sixth hour (twelve o'clock noon of the same day) they put Him on the cross, and about the ninth hour (equivalent to three o'clock), Jesus died (Matt. 27: 1, 26, 45, 46). Joseph of Arimathea, upon securing permission from Pilate, laid the body of Jesus in his new sepulcher. No more than 24 hours elapsed from

WHO changed God's time and holy laws? "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. . . And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time [1260 years]. . . And a host was given him against the daily sacrifice, . . and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced and prospered."—Dan. 7, 8.

ROMAN TIME	Dec.	1958	The last fifteen days of the Roman year, including the pagan festival days to which Rome called the world to bow and commemorate.
Derived from	DAY	DATE	Christmas, New Year, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday
HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY AND PAGANISM	Wed.	17	FEAST of the Saturnalia Here Rome began her unbridled revelries, feasts, and carnival, during the closing days of the pagan year. Into these feast days she baptized the religious world, that she might distract the attention of Christians from the old heathen feasts by celebrating so-called Christian festivals on the same days. Among her feasts the Saturnalia may be counted the chief and also the most vile; it provided a model for the Christmas, New Year, and Easter celebrations. While the week was devoted to Saturn, three distinct feasts were celebrated, namely: The Saturnalia Proper, The Opilia, in honor of his wife, Ops, the goddess of field labor, and the Sigillaria in which sigillia or little earthenware figures were exposed for sale and purchased as children's toys. During the feast, wickedness and licentiousness knew no bounds. Freedom of speech and gambling, at other times illegal, were now permitted. Such were the days that ushered in Dec. 25th, upon which date this power placed the birth of Christ to be celebrated. On this Day was celebrated the feast and "birth of the unconquered sun," and the oriental deity Mithra, fixed by the Latin Church in Century V as the birthday of Christ. The heathen customs which have been absorbed by the churches, break forth on this day, chiefly from two sources, Roman and Teutonic paganism, namely, burning candles, toys and games, plum puddings, Santa Claus, the mistletoe and holly. As the Saturnalia continued for a week, we note from Dec. 25 to Jan. 1 the festivities of the modern carnival continue with a like degree of abandonment, having their end in the New Year revels.
Pagan god THOR	Thur.	18	
A Pagan goddess FRIGA	Fri.	19	
Pagan god SATURN	Sat.	20	
Worshipers of the SUN	Sun.	21	
Worshipers of the MOON	Mon.	22	
A German hero TUISCO	Tue.	23	
Pagan god WODEN	Wed.	24	
So-called by world, but not so-called where Truth's unfurled.	Thur.	25	CHRISTMAS This week is neither B. C. nor A. D.
	Fri.	26	
	Sat.	27	
	Sun.	28	
	Mon.	29	
	Tue.	30	NEW YEAR Called first day by Rome's decree, but not believed when Truth you see
	Wed.	31	
	1958	Jan. 1	The new year feast of the pagans was held in honor of the war god Janus. He was the oldest of ancient Rome, and had two faces, one supposed to be looking backward into the old year, and one forward to the new. The old Roman year with its wild scenes of debauchery is truly modeled after the ancient Saturnalia, ending in drunkenness.
Good Friday	Apr.	4	With the change of Easter to a fixed date by the Nicene Council, Friday necessarily became in Roman time the day of Christ's crucifixion. Hippolytus was one who claimed that the crucifixion should be governed by the Passover.
Saturday	Apr.	5	The religious world was forced to accept this as the day in which Christ remained in the tomb, because Friday and Sunday were made fixed dates.
Easter Sunday	Apr.	6	Derived from the festival of the goddess Ostera. In A. D. 159 Rome sought to compel all to keep Easter as a fixed date. The early Christians contended for Abib 15, the day following the Jewish Passover. But in A. D. 325 the Council of Nice crushed their last resistance.

* First. The word translated "first" is *protos* which means "before, former, sooner . . . from the root spring many branches; all having the common notion of before." This brings the passage into harmony with John 13: 1, 2. The events narrated took place before the feast.

the time that Jesus met with His disciples to partake of the Last Supper until He had been crucified and laid in the tomb. All this took place on the 13th of Abib. "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54). The sabbath came on the 14th of Abib which was also the Jewish Passover. On that day the women rested, according to the commandment (Luke 23:56). On the next day, very early in the morning, the women found the empty tomb, which places Christ's resurrection on Abib 15.

Thus we see that the Roman power, the woman who bears the identification of "Mystery," made thorough work of altering the sacred seasons: changing Christ's birth from spring to winter; the anniversary of the Last Supper from a yearly observance in the evening to a Sunday observance in the morning; the anniversary of His resurrection from the fifteenth day of the first month of the Bible year to "Easter Sun-day."

Other revealing marks of identification appear on this woman's forehead. Her complete name is,

"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5).

Her second title is a close parallel to the first. "Babylon" means "confusion." It incorporates that whole system of religious error which is destined to fall at Christ's coming. (See Revelation 18.) The urgent appeal to everyone who seeks to escape her doom is:

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (vs. 4, 5).

Her third title is deserving of close scrutiny: "The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." She, Rome, is the mother of—pure and holy women? No!—only harlot daughters; she is the pro-

Harlot Daughters— genitor of all religious abomination extant in Christendom today. Students of history know that the Reformation of the sixteenth century gave birth to numerous religions. The world had grown weary of papal domination of the property, the minds, and the very souls of men. They had writhed under the injustices of the Inquisition in which thousands of "heretics" perished in the flames without even a decent trial. Martin Luther was the first to raise the standard of rebellion against the corruption and abuse of Rome. With slow but steady tread the Reformation spread over all Europe; blood flowed as water in kingdoms, states, and principalities. The plains of the Palatinate, Saxony, and the Netherlands were ravaged and desolated again and again as the armies of Rome and Protestantism clashed in conflict. The blackest pages of French and Spanish history were recorded at this time. Nourished by the fires of martyrdom and the spirit of liberty, Protestantism grew strong.

To comprehend fully the history of that age would involve the review of the endless councils and decrees, the modifications and the adjustments, the heresies and the counter-heresies, the inquisitions, the speculations and writings of generations of monks, popes and antipopes from the East and from the West, "reformations" and counter-reformations. The result of this unwholesome process: confusion thrice confounded; a continual splitting of sects and resubdividing of groups until today instead of "one Lord" and "one faith," we have the sad

spectacle of a thousand gods and a thousand beliefs.

For the liberty of conscience which we possess today, we frequently hear the Reformation given the credit. But, let us dispassionately ask: Did the Reformation actually reform? In the main, what did this great undertaking accomplish? What end did this immense destruction of life and property achieve? We think of Protestantism and Catholicism as being as different as day and night, as far apart as the poles. Protestantism did correct many obvious abuses of Rome, unshackled thought and speech, lighted the fires of liberty, virtue and freedom; but can it be said that Protestantism forsook the wine of the "golden cup" held by Rome? Did she eliminate the mysteries of Catholicism? Is not the religion of Protestantism essentially Catholic? Who gave to the world as Christian doctrine the immortality of the soul, the Trinity, hell fire, the vicarious death of Christ, Adamic condemnation, etc.? It is impossible in this enlightened century to claim that the Reformation of Martin Luther and his contemporaries restored and gave to the world the religion of Jesus in its simplicity and grandeur.

For example, John Calvin, contemporary of Luther and founder of the Reformed Church, taught that God predestinated some men to salvation and others to damnation. This belief, the very heart of the Calvinistic doctrine, opposes all justice—principal attribute of the God of the Bible who weighs men by their actions (I Sam. 2:3) over which they have full control. One deed which must remain forever attached to the name of Calvin is his burning of Michael Servetus at the stake. Servetus, a Spanish theologian, could not subscribe to the tri-personality of the Godhead, nor to the eternity of the Son. He disputed these issues hotly with Calvin until his martyrdom through Calvin's influence. Bible history establishes no such precedent, nor does it sanction such demeanor, but rather, true Christian ethics permit men and women a freewill choice of religious conviction (Joshua 24:15).

John Knox is another great name among sixteenth century reformers. He introduced and established Calvinism in Scotland. Other principal phases of the doctrine are original sin and the fall of man, salvation through belief in Jesus Christ, etc. With full reliance upon justice of God, we can neither believe that all humankind is condemned for one man's sin, nor justified by another man's righteousness. In the words of the Sacred Law: "Every one shall die for his own iniquity" (Jer. 31:30). Nor was this so-called "original sin" binding upon Adam's first son, for to him the Lord said, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Gen. 4:7).

Church historians remember John Wesley, together with his brother Charles, as leader of the eighteenth century religious revival and founder of Methodism. According to Wesley, "Nothing in the Christian system is of greater consequence than the doctrine of atonement. All believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, or of anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them." Thus Romanism survives in the vast body of Methodists today.

Time would fail us to mention the work of such men as Whitefield, and Dwight L. Moody, who said, "You ask me what my hope is. It is that Christ died for my sins, in my

stead, in my place, and therefore I can enter into the life eternal. Take that doctrine of substitution out of the Bible, and my hope is lost. He only is safe for eternity who is sheltered behind the finished work of Christ." Did Paul rely on a substitute to do the work for him? did he rely on the finished work of Christ? No. At the end of his career he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7).

In the latter half of the nineteenth century Charles Taze Russell added his theory to the growing religious confusion. With his assumption that Christ returned to

earth in 1874, was personally present, but invisible, hidden in the "desert," and engaged in judgment of the dead, he fulfilled the prediction of Jesus Himself who foresaw the emergence of the Russell heresy and issued solemn warning: "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. . . . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chamber; believe it not" (Matt. 24:23, 26). Why not? What is our protection against this deception? "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (v. 27). Lightning is, above all else, visible; it cannot be concealed. The present doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses is Rutherfordism, necessarily revised, but equally unfounded: Christ took power in heaven in 1914, they say now. His first act was casting out Satan. This brought World War I to ill-fated mortals here. Christ is now in His second presence and will always remain invisible to humans.

From the standpoint of the Scriptures and not man's assumption, the basic fact of His advent is a *personal revealing* (Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7), active from its first moment, not an invisible presence brooding impotently over humanity while the world goes from bad to worse.

William Miller and followers were convinced that the Lord's second advent would occur October 22, 1844, despite Jesus' warning against date setting: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). Successors known as the Seventh Day Adventists rely on the Ten Commandments as the moral standard for all men in all ages, understanding the "seventh day" of the Fourth Commandment to require keeping the seventh day of the week. Anyone who is acquainted with the Sermon on the Mount will readily agree that Jesus' restatement of the Ten Commandments so enlarged their significance as to make null and void the original ten (see Matt. 5:21-48).

Mary Baker Eddy follows in the train of deceivers with her fantasy that disease and illness are simply delusions of the human mind. Was Epaphroditus' sickness, unto near death for the work of Christ, simply a delusion of his mind (Phil. 2:25-30)? God is mind, not person, according to Christian Science. Shall we believe this assumption or the inspired writer who said that Christ is in the express image of His Father's *person*? (Heb. 1:3).

The man of the present hour is Billy Graham, whose very popular evangelism in Wembley Stadium, Madison Square Garden, Yankee Stadium, and elsewhere, has raised hopes for a great revival of religious interest. With all due respect for his sincerity, as for that of hundreds of his predecessors, and with appreciation of the

temporary good accomplished by his preaching, these men cannot bring about a revival of the religion of Christ in the world today until they are willing to break 100 per cent with Romanism (confusion) and teach the doctrine of Christ. Dr. Graham believes in a personal devil invested with supernatural power and wisdom, that the soul of man is made in the image of God, in the atoning death of Christ, etc. By way of contrast, Jesus encountered the devil among His closest followers: Judas was the devil when he betrayed Him (John 6:70); and to Peter He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23). The man made in the image of God is multitudinous, still in process of creation, composed of Christ and the Church. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). Is this the soul made in the image of God?

Where in all these theories of men can be found the old ancient gospel of Christ? Where in this catalog of reformers can be found one who echoed the Man of Galilee, He whose whole teaching could be incorporated in the simple statement, yet gigantic demand, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48)?

Is not the Protestant religion of today as far from practical Christianity as in the days when license to sin was sold for gold? Martin Luther was a bitter foe of good works, the pivot upon which the religion of Jesus rested. And surely the mainstay of Protestantism is the literal death of Christ on a Roman cross as a propitiatory offering.

With all accuracy, the Revelator describes the papal system as giving birth to "harlot" daughters who perpetuate the doctrinal errors of their infamous mother.

Next Issue: UTTER DESOLATION.

Three Sorts of Sin

Sin's always sin and yet there are
Three sorts of sin, mankind to mar:
The sin of weakness, self-confessed,
The better nature dispossessed.
By some temptation that the tried
Have not the will to thrust aside.

There is another, men admit,
Among their fellows flaunting it:
It is the sinning of the strong
Who try to glorify their wrong,
Such power to wield, such wealth to win,
They throw a glamour over sin.

And then there is the sin that wears
The garb of goodness, says its pray'rs
And seeks to hide, where none may see
Behind respectability
The private sinning of the cheat—
Not only sinning, but deceit.

Sin's always sin; perhaps no grade,
Degree, distinction, God hath made,
And He alone can judge mankind
And yet three sorts sin we find:
The sin confessed by those who yield,
The sin displayed, the sin concealed.

—Sel.



Honoring the Birthday of a King

(A Home Service for Family, Friends, Neighbors)



Order of Service

A Welcome.

Hymn: "Joy to the World," No. 74, Megiddo Hymnal.

Scripture Reading: Luke 2: 8—20.

Prayer.

Hymn: "Some Day," No. 233, Megiddo Hymnal.

Sermon: "The Beatitudes," (page 4).

Hymn: "Onward Go!" No. 182, Megiddo Hymnal.

Benediction.

(Additional songs or readings may be added as time and circumstances permit.)

A Welcome

KIND friends and neighbors, it is indeed a pleasure to have you join our family circle today. We meet to honor the birth of the greatest man who ever walked the face of this earth. The story of the Babe of Bethlehem is ever beautiful, but it is the matured Christ to whom we are indebted for our perfect example of Christian living. Without Him we could not find our way through life's constant maze. With Him as Guide and Pioneer of our faith, we are never alone. He has gone on before, treading the path where our feet must go and brightening our way with light inextinguishable. If we follow Him to the end, Death itself can hold no terrors, for Christ has conquered

there by His resurrection to life.

There is a great amount of Bible evidence which establishes the time of Christ's birth, and the purpose of His life—He was born to be King when that better era dawns on this earth and His prayer is fulfilled which He taught His disciples to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." But today we are principally concerned with His message, which, if it reaches our hearts and affects our lives, can transform us into honorable citizens of that better world. The present scheme of things is rapidly passing away. Nothing is of real intrinsic value, only judgment, righteousness, truth, and the Kingdom of God.

'Tis Christmas Day

Prayer

ETERNAL FATHER, we are grateful for the mercies of the past year. In a world filled with trouble Thou hast been our shield and defender, our rock and high tower. Grant that Thy mercies of the past may teach us to trust to Thy wise direction the unknown future. Still the future cannot be unknown nor uncertain, for the lamp of faith in Thy Word lights the way, and we know that Thou wilt be true to Thy Word.

Give us wisdom to discern between good and evil, strength to choose the good, honesty to be loyal to the good, and endurance to stand by the highest good that we know, in steadfast assurance that these decisions will reap for us the highest reward in the world to come. Amen.

1. 'Tis Christ-mas day, let each one sing High praise to God, our glorious King;
2. There is a Christ-mas day to come, May we be there bright as the sun,
3. In this New Year and Christ-mas day With hearts aglow let each one say,

'Tis A-hub day, it is the time To cel-e-brate in ev-'ry clime.
For Christ will come and bid us shine As jew-els bright in world di-vine.
"We will be led by Thy righthand, So we can reach sweet Beulah land."

Chorus
'Tis Christ-mas day, true Christ-mas day, As Shepherds heard the an-gel say,
Oh, think of that first Christ-mas song The an-gels sang when Christ was born,
Sweet "peace on earth, good will to men," To this we all can say, A-men.
Sweet "peace on earth, good will to men," We ech-o now as an-gels then.

Benediction

HEAVENLY FATHER, bless us as we part. May we carry into the new year more of the spirit of the Master, more love of our fellow man, more loyalty to truth, more longing for holiness, more peace in believing. Grant that it may be good for us to have been here, and may others see the joy of true religion reflected in our countenances, and lighting their way to Zion. Amen.

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

In his day shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

BLOSSOMS

IMPORTANT THINGS

The things that count are never weighed on scales
Nor measured by the dollar's gruesome face;
They are the friendly smile that never fails,
The handclasp that no bribery can replace.
The things that count are not of mansion size
Nor lined with jeweled satin nor brocade;
They are the simple trust in children's eyes
And prayer that helps the person who has prayed.
The things that count are courage in distress
And hope that shines as brightly as a star,
And vision and humility that bless
With God's true plan all living things that are.
These are the things that have the deepest worth;
These are the most important things on earth.

One has to invest something of himself in the finer things of life before he appreciates them.

The opposite is true, also. We begin to give a thing up, and then we lose our interest in it. Remember how that happened with Charles Darwin? He became so engrossed in the problems of evolution he ceased to invest in the realm of music. At the end of his life he told how he had lost the power to appreciate music. He had failed to give thought and attention to it.

This is a law of life. The men who put most in a given cause are the ones who draw the most interest. In his preface to Mr. E. T. Cooke's "Guide to the National Gallery," John Ruskin wrote: "When I last lingered in the gallery before my old favorites, I thought them more wonderful than ever."

Emerson put it this way, "Go often to the house of thy friend, for weeds choke the unused path."

We are never
less alone than
when we are in the
society of a single,
faithful friend; never
less deserted than
when we are carried in
the arms of the All-
Powerful.

*Wisdom is oftentimes
nearer when we stoop
than when we soar.*

The integrity of men
is to be measured by
their conduct, not by
their professions.

*Happiness is the art
of finding joy and sat-
isfaction in the little
privileges of life.*

"The greatest memory of my father was the first time I saw him on his knees in prayer."

A young man who came to me for counseling made this statement. Tucked away in the cherished memories of his heart was that humble picture of his parent kneeling before God.

"Of all acts of men," said Thomas Carlyle, "repentance is the most divine. The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none."

Pray for your children. Any child is stronger when he goes forth from a home of prayer. Many families in our parish have Bible reading and prayers before breakfast—just at the time when the children need it most, and the husband needs the poise to begin a new day at his work.

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26: 41).

IF THERE WERE NO EASTER

*How would it be, if I had to go
Into the dark, alone?
What would I do, if the Lord had not
Made my last pathway known?
How would it be, if the Lord had not
Fashioned a place for me?
What would I do, should His love not
last
Throughout eternity?
How would it be, if I could not greet
Him, and my loved ones, There?
What would I do, if it could not be
He is my answered prayer?
How would it be, had He not assured
So I could always know?
"If it were not as I promised you,
I would have told you so!"*

A wise man desires no more than he can get justly, use soberly, distribute gladly, and leave contentedly.

Who is your friend, your most beloved one?
In all the world who is most dear today?
Is it your father, mother, daughter gay?
The spouse you love? or your illustrious son?
Your brother, sister, or some soul who won
Your admiration? Can it be, O say,
A relative who walks the noble way?
Or just a friend who has some favor done?
No, none of these could ever be to you
The most endearing friend, however much
They love you now, their friendship soon must end.
But God alone, if your own heart is true,
In every need extends His healing touch
And is indeed the Everlasting Friend.

Your Questions Answered



BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

Please comment on Romans 5: 12 which reads, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

This is one of St. Paul's "difficult" sayings (II Pet. 3: 16) which has been distorted by theologians ever since the Apostasy. To accept the ordinary interpretation of this text, that Adam's fall brought sin and its consequences into the world and visited the penalty on his innocent, unborn posterity, is to deny the justice of God and to contradict the plain teachings of the Scriptures. The religion of the Bible is first and last a matter of individual responsibility. The eternal principle is stated in Ezek. 18: 20, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." See also Deut. 24: 16.

The "man" by whom sin entered into the world is not an individual but a multitudinous man, composed of all who have sinned under covenant. This is proved by the last of the verse: "... for that all have sinned." Every member of this "man" has sinned, or transgressed God's law; and as such is subject to the penalty of death (Rom. 6: 23), from which he can escape only by turning from all sin.

Where in the Bible does it say that the devil came down with his angels?

Revelation 12: 9 is part of an allegory of the great conflict between the forces of good and evil, the Truth and its supporters being represented by a "woman" and the powers of darkness by a "dragon." At the second coming of Christ there will be war in heaven (v. 7)—the political heaven—and the dragon will be overthrown in the battle of Armageddon. "Heaven" is a synonym for power, and when evil is cast out of power it goes "underground" for a thousand years, its only field being the secret hearts of men. Here it lurks unexpressed until exposed at the end of the Millennium, and finally destroyed at the second judgment. Read Rev. 20: 1—15.

In the Dec. 14, 1957 issue, page 9, you refer to angels or spirit beings as immortal, quoting Luke 20: 36. It does not appear to harmonize with I Tim. 6: 16, nor yet with Rev. 20: 10, where Satan is to be cast into the lake of fire.

I Timothy 6: 16 speaks of Christ "who only hath immortality." To take this in its narrowest sense is to exclude even the Eternal Father as well as the angels. There must be no contradictions in the Bible if we are to trust it. We understand this text as referring to our race and planet: and of this *kosmos* Christ is the only one who has yet been rewarded with immortality. "Every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15: 23).

As for Satan, he is not a literal monster or an individual, but a symbolic term for the power of evil—sin and all sinners. The "lake of fire" is the "second death"—annihilation (Rev. 21: 8).

If Jesus did not exist before His birth, how do you explain John 1: 1—18?

This chapter is invariably cited as proof of the deity and pre-existence of Christ, but it teaches the exact opposite. "In the beginning was the Word"—the *Logos*, or

divine wisdom; not a person but an abstraction. Moffatt's translation renders verse 1: "The Logos existed in the very beginning, The Logos was with God, The Logos was divine." This personification of wisdom has an Old Testament parallel in Proverbs 8.

Verse 14 tells us the Word was made flesh, i. e., eatable, assimilable (Jer. 15: 16; John 6: 57). Obedience to the Logos was exemplified to the highest degree in the life of Christ; and as we follow His example the Logos, or Word, becomes to us "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans. 1: 16).

In the MEGIDDO MESSAGE, Dec. 28, 1957, page 11, in answer to a question about Matt. 5: 17, you say, "By His birth and ministry, Christ put an end to the Mosaic Law," etc. Do you include the Ten Commandments and verses 31—33 of Deut. 5?

The Ten Commandments were an integral part of the Law which ceased to be valid when Christ began the preaching of a better law. They were replaced by better commandments (Matt. 5: 21—48). Deut. 31—33 is also invalid, insofar as it refers to the keeping of the Law of Moses, but it contains a guiding principle which is eternal: all law, whether of Moses or of Christ, is given to be obeyed. This principle is echoed throughout the Bible, emphatically by Jesus in such passages as Matt. 5: 19, 20, 48; 7: 24—27.

What is the mark of the beast which is to be avoided? Do the Ten Commandments have anything to do with it? Is breaking one or more of the commandments an act of accepting the mark of the beast?

The "mark of the beast" (Rev. 13: 16, 17) is the acceptance of any doctrine or practice of spiritual Babylon, the great system of error which rules the minds of all mankind. You have correctly surmised the answer: to break any commandment of God is to accept the mark of the beast who deceives the world with the teaching that the commandments cannot be kept, and that the sacrifice of Christ makes up the deficit. The Ten Commandments, as part of a defunct code, have nothing to do with it.

Is the Megidido Mission in any way affiliated with any other religious organization?

Since the time it was founded, 1880, the Megidido Mission has been independent and self-supporting. It is in no way affiliated with any other religious body, large or small.

What does the Megidido Mission believe about God?

We believe there is but one God, all-powerful, the Creator and supreme Ruler of all things. God is a person (Hebrews 1: 3) in whom dwells all wisdom, justice and mercy (Psalm 89: 14).

Do you believe God answers prayers today?

Yes, but quite often the answer is No, for men do not pray according to His will. Prayer is a command (I Thess. 5: 17), and if we pray according to His will He hears us (I John 5: 14). He will not hear us if we do not keep the commandments which He has commanded us to observe (I John 3: 22; Isa. 59: 1, 2). We must learn to ask God to give us what He sees is best for us, and not for what we would naturally choose. We cannot ask God to give us that which His Word forbids, nor need we expect Him to do for us what we can do for ourselves. Our prayers should be for God to help us overcome our besetting sins and if we do on our part He will help and arrange circumstances to work for our good (Rom. 8: 28).

How Bible Time is Reckoned

The months and years of the Bible calendar of ancient times have been established by the moon and the sun. Each month began with a new moon and lasted until the next new moon. Furthermore, the lunar months had to correspond to the seasons of the year which are governed by the sun. For instance, the month of Abib, or Nisan, with the Passover Festival, had to occur in the Spring, and the month Tishri with the harvest festival in the Fall. Because the Bible calendar is luni-solar is why there are complications in its structure.

Since the solar year of about 365 days is approximately 11 days longer than the 12 lunar months, the problem arises of balancing the solar year with the lunar year.

In early Biblical times the solution was found by the following procedure: "The beginnings of the months were determined by direct observation of the moon. The new months were sanctified and their beginnings announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after witnesses had testified that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, confirmed by calculation and duly accepted. The Jewish communities were notified of the beginning of the months in earlier times by kindling of night fires on the mountains, and later on by messengers." —*The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, by Arthur Spier.

When, after two or three years, the annual excess of 11 days had accumulated to approximately 30 days, a thirteenth month, Adar II, or Ve-Adar, was inserted before Nisan in order to assure that the first or Passover month would occur in spring and not retrograde toward winter. But astronomical calculation was not the only basis for intercalation of the thirteenth month. The other decisive factor was the actual arrival of spring.

When the barley in the fields had not yet ripened, when the fruit on the trees had not grown properly, when the winter rains had not stopped, when the roads for Pass-

over pilgrims had not dried up, and when the young pigeons had not become fledged, then the Council added the intercalary month. They considered the astronomical facts together with the religious requirements of Passover and the natural conditions of the country.

For our present-day requirements we need but to ascertain the beginning of the first month of the Bible year which is the first new moon after the vernal equinox. On that day we, the members of the Megiddo Mission, observe the anniversary of Christ's birth.

19-Year Cycle

As the date of the new year is governed by the moon, each year the day corresponds differently with the present calendar. Listed below are the dates on which Abib First appeared during the past twenty-five years. Please note that each 19 years the dates are almost the same.

March 31, 1930	April 8, 1940	March 19, 1950
March 20, 1931	March 28, 1941	April 7, 1951
April 6, 1932	April 16, 1942	March 26, 1952
March 26, 1933	April 5, 1943	April 14, 1953
April 15, 1934	March 25, 1944	April 4, 1954
April 4, 1935	April 13, 1945	March 25, 1955
March 23, 1936	April 3, 1946	April 12, 1956
April 12, 1937	March 23, 1947	April 1, 1957
April 1, 1938	April 10, 1948	March 21, 1958
March 21, 1939	March 30, 1949	

In 1930 the event was observed on March 31, and after 19 years, in 1949 it was March 30. The beginning of the years 1931, 1932, and 1934 correspond nearly with the years 1950, 1951, and 1953 consecutively; while the years 1938 and 1939 correspond perfectly with 1957, and 1958.

Awake, O earth, from winter's sleep,
And, dressed in garments fresh and clean,
Your rendezvous with Abib keep;
For soon the new moon shall be seen.
Awake, and let the vernal breeze,
That bathes you with its gentle touch,
Absorb the scent of budding trees,
Of crocus, violets, and such.

Long dismal days of chilling rains
Have kept the shepherds from your slopes;
But cattle lowing on the plains
Now lend fresh strength to Israel's hopes,
As groups of pilgrims here and there
Are seen to guide a plodding beast;
All bound for David's city, where
They will attend the New Moon Feast.

The hopes of Israel are high,
For it may be that Christ will come
(Thy know the time is very nigh)
In triumph to Jerusalem.

The Fruition of Our Hope

"Oh, may He come, to rule as king,
And break the galling Roman yoke;
That Israel again may sing."
Thus pilgrims to each other spoke.

They did not realize that He
Must come and do His Father's will,
Thus die to sin, iniquity,
Before this hope He could fulfill.
Even His own disciples asked,
"Wilt Thou set up Thy Kingdom now,
That we may hasten to the task,
Until the world to Thee shall bow?"

He came not as a warrior brave,
Ready to conquer, and to slay;
But of Himself He freely gave,
And grew more godlike day by day.

By rigorous self-discipline
He learned obedience to God's law,
And, overcoming every sin,
He left a Pattern without flaw.

He sits now at His Father's right,
Waiting that grand, auspicious day
When earthward He will take His flight,
And o'er this wide domain hold sway.
Then, as a lion, bold and strong,
With diadem upon His brow,
He will go forth to right each wrong;
Nations to Him shall humbly bow.

Hasten the day of His return
By keeping in the narrow way.
For this event His children yearn,
While pressing onward, day by day.
Some day will see the heavens ope,
A multitude of angels, then
The glad fruition of our hope,
With "Peace on Earth, good will to men."
—L. L. S.

Simplicity— its Beauty

MARTHA was much cumbered. She was hot and tired; she felt flustered and driven; her patience was sorely tried and there, in the very presence of the Master Himself, it broke through to the open view of thousands who would after read of her mistake.

Those of us who are burdened with the multiple tasks of earning a living, taking care of our homes, and providing for the physical needs of our families and ourselves can feel that we share in Martha's rebuke from the Lord. Too often our temporal duties have occupied first place while our spiritual welfare has been pushed aside because of lack of time. The task of maintaining our existence is a complex and time-consuming one, to be sure. Still, there *must* be time for the more important spiritual duties or there will be nothing more for us to hope for beyond these temporal tasks. That is all we shall have.

But perhaps we are one who is not making the obvious mistake that Martha made. Perhaps our time is wisely managed so that we spend only the least necessary time on our physical needs, eliminating our superfluous activities so that we may devote a generous portion of the day's hours to God's service. This is good. Would that more people had such good judgment. Yet when this step is taken we may still be in danger of becoming much cumbered. We may be careful and troubled about many things which are only secondary.

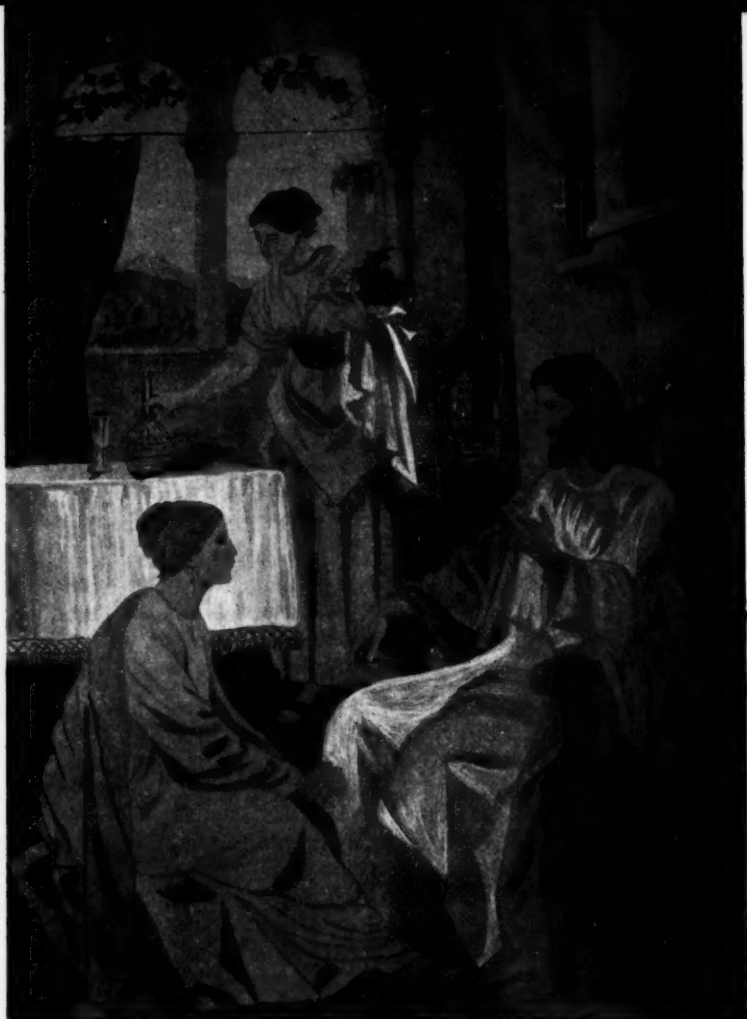
"Do not go to so much trouble to get a nice supper for me, Martha. I want to tell you about the Kingdom." Hear His gentle reproof and appeal. "Something simple will do just as well, Martha. Come and sit down and let's talk."

God seems to prefer simplicity and He demands it in His followers. We understand that plainness of dress and person is a part of His law; our homes are devoid of useless ornamentation and expensive furnishings; no elaborate concoctions come forth from our kitchens, our food is plain and simple; our money must not be spent for that which is not bread, nor our labor for that which satisfieth not. We have learned that plainness and simplicity are best for us.

God uses simple things. The King Himself was a man of humble parentage and common occupation. Learned and skillful teacher that he was, Gamaliel did not qualify for the position, neither were the educated scribes and Pharisees chosen. Plain and unlearned fishermen carried the light of life to men.

Jesus taught the people in symbols of the most common and well-known objects. He used no eloquent speech; He spoke of salt and houses, birds and sheep, sowing and reaping. Common enough—yet those who heard Him wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. They were simple words, the kind which strike at the heart.

Compare the complete and confusing nonsense taught by the churches with the dignified simplicity of the gospel of truth.



We love to think of our simple little white church and we have no longing for the magnificent cathedrals with their imposing spires. God uses the little white church to house His treasure, while the temples of the land are void and barren. Compare the gorgeous altars of Babylon with the little fishing boat which served as a pulpit for our Master, if you would know what I mean. Had we been there that day by the sea, we would no doubt have thought a smelly fishing boat not good enough for the proclamation of Truth. We would have tried to fix up something nicer for Him.

Like Martha.

There was nothing wrong with Martha's motive. She wanted the supper to be nice for the Lord. All her elaborate preparations were for *Him*. Yet, she was reproofed.

Is it possible to go to too much trouble for the Lord? We certainly want to give Him our very best. But the little incident at Martha's house that day seems to teach us that it is possible to be careful and troubled, even in serving the Lord, about many things which are not really necessary.

When we perform an act of service for the Lord, we are apt to become so engrossed in our elaborate preparations that it is easy to lose sight of the purpose of it all. We want our bit of service to be nice for the Lord, worthy of the Truth. In our anxiety to present the Truth in an attractive manner we may be in danger of cumbering it with so many outward adornments that its light may not shine through to the best advantage. The light of Truth is brilliant. It needs nothing to enhance its beauty. The more beautiful the picture, the plainer the frame should be.

(Continued on page 25)

The Struggle for Preeminence *Versus* Humility and Service



AMONG the beautiful acts of Jesus recorded in the gospels shines that humble act of service when He washed the feet of His disciples. They had gathered to partake of that Last Supper. It was to be their last night together, but things were not right with the Twelve. There existed among them that all-too-human craving for superiority; each wanted to be the greatest.

On festive occasions it was customary to have a servant present to minister to the needs of the guests. Whether or not Jesus planned it thus is incidental, but there was no servant at this special meeting. Someone of their number would have to do a servant's task; but at this time when each was seeking the highest place, not one of the disciples was inclined to offer his services. To do so would be especially repugnant, for it would mark such a one as a servant.

Feeling that Jesus would soon establish His Kingdom, they thought that on this occasion He doubtless would make plans for this Kingdom and appoint His chief assistants. This was not the time to depreciate one's importance by taking a servant's place. Thoughts like these must have gone through their minds: "Let John or James do it because they asked for the place at His right hand and at His left hand in the Kingdom; that would serve them right." Or, "Let Peter do it, he's always so forward and outspoken anyway," or "Judas, because he is too critical."

Thus it went, until Jesus, instead of appointing one of them and humiliating him before the others, did that menial task Himself, and did it lovingly. That was enough! To see their Master doing for His brethren the lowly task which each of them despised impressed them as nothing else could have done. At that moment they saw in an instant the nobility of doing a menial task and doing it willingly. And from that moment on we do not find any more recorded instances of struggles for preeminence among them.

In washing the disciples' feet, Jesus accomplished what could not have been done by instruction and reproof. That deed was worth a thousand sermons. It changed them from ill-mannered, quarrelsome, jealous, self-seeking men, into humble, teachable, trustful disciples, ready to follow the Master wherever He might lead. "I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death," said Peter,

and though he failed at his first test, later he added courage and lived up to his confession.

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From time immemorial man has sought to gain dominion over his fellows. They have done this with no regard for the feeling or injuries inflicted on others, so long as they themselves came out on top. If it meant the enslavement or oppression of a whole nation, so that the rulers could live in luxury, that was done with no scruples against it. If it meant war or destruction, the king or ruler cared not. His own selfishness, greed, and whims must be satisfied.

If this lust for power or preeminence existed merely among the pagan and half-civilized tribes, one might not think of it too seriously. But civilized nations have been and are guilty of this offense. Even the people of God—the Hebrew race whom God had chosen—did not escape this plague that infects the hearts of men. The record of the race reveals a continuous series of struggles for power to rule the populace and to live in luxury. There were good rulers also, of course, who ruled well and were a blessing to the people, but this was rare. Usually, wrong was on the throne and right suffered.

The history of the kings of Israel and of Judah reveals many such unfortunate battles by kings and usurpers struggling to hold or attain power and dominion. While by the time of Jesus the kingdom of Israel was no longer in existence and they were subject to another nation, there was still the perpetual conflict among the priesthood and the desires for the chief places in the synagogue. But Jesus' view of nobility was different. He instructed His disciples thus: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20: 25—27).

Following Jesus' instruction and example the early church started out well, but it did not long continue thus. Paul had foretold a departure from the faith (Acts 20: 29, 30; II Tim. 4: 1—4). Men arose who cared more for preeminence than for the welfare of the church of Christ (III John 9, 10). The condition grew worse and worse

and little by little the power of the church was concentrated under the head of papacy.

Writing of this situation the historian D'Aubigne expressed it thus:

"At the beginning it was a society of brethren, and now an absolute monarchy is reared in the midst of them. All Christians were priests of the living God (I Peter 2: 9), with humble pastors for their guidance. But a lofty head is uplifted from the midst of these pastors; a mysterious voice utters words full of pride; an iron hand compels all men, small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, to take the mark of its power. The holy and primitive equality of souls before God is lost sight of. Christians are divided into two strangely unequal camps. On the one side a separate class of priests daring to usurp the name of the Church, and claiming to be possessed of peculiar privileges in the sight of the Lord. On the other, timid flocks reduced to a blind and passive submission; a people gagged and silenced and delivered over to a proud caste. Every tribe, language, and nation of Christendom submitted to the dominion of this spiritual king who had received power to overcome."

Shameful? Indeed!

Under the domination of the popes the true, humble spirit of the shepherds of God's people was lost completely. It was a great departure from the reasonable and Christlike counsel given by Peter to the elders of churches for all time. He wrote: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Never forgetting the great lesson he had learned, he added, "All of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility"; and "Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God" (I Peter 5: 2-6).

It might be answered that that condition existed in the Dark Ages and that now things are different. But politics in churches of today is so prevalent that it is obnoxious. A young minister if he is going to get ahead in his profession is forced to play the role of a politician. To verify this fact one needs but to ask any minister of any of the noted churches. Some months ago an ex-clergyman, in describing the sad condition, said in part; "The outright bootlicking, backslapping, and 'apple polishing' which go on in the aggressive fight for position, places, and prestige are appalling to any sensitive young minister. The pity is that this is about what is expected. The leading laymen expect it and foster it. The rule in the church is very often 'who you know'—not 'who you are' and what you have genuinely to offer in preaching, personal example, creativity, intellectual clarity, honesty, and sincerity." For reasons of this nature many young ministers are leaving the church to take up other professions.

Referring again to the story in the Upper Room—therein lies a deep lesson for the world, especially the church, today. Willing men and women are needed everywhere who are willing to serve, willing to do disagreeable and tedious tasks, willing to sacrifice for the privilege of serving. Jesus laid aside His outer garment and went to work. He left us an example that we should do likewise. It would be well for the church-goers also to do this; not merely to deputize others, not merely contribute of their

abundance, but actually pitch right in and do that which needs to be done.

Jesus made Himself of no reputation but took upon Himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2: 5-7). He won the respect of the people and the glory of God, being highly exalted in the presence of the Father, and in due time every knee shall bend to Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord. By that event in the Upper Room Jesus did not consciously make a demonstration of His humility but revealed His true, inner self. Every true Christian will adopt this pattern for his ideal in life. True humility and service first, and the exaltation and honors will follow in due time.

Jesus also taught humility by means of His parable about the guest who was bidden to the feast (Luke 14: 7-11). Those who voluntarily take the chief seats may be humiliated in being asked to take lower seats when more honorable guests arrive, whereas those who take the lowest seats are honored when they are asked to come forward. The following thoughts are pure conjecture; but it may well be that Jesus experienced just such a scene during some of His attendances at feasts and weddings. It may even have happened at Cana. It may have been that He saw the mother of Zebedee's children urging James and John forward to the chief places while He and His mother took the lower seats and later were honored. It is all possible.

What a lesson to learn!

No man can ever say to you, Give this man place; no man can ever say to you, Sit lower down, if you have already chosen for yourself the lowest seat. No man can humiliate you and clothe you with shame if you are always clothed with humility. But if you are always and everywhere exalting yourself, if you are scheming for yourself and choosing to push yourself forward that you may *appear* well before men, depend upon it you are laying up shame and humiliation for yourself. If you are always pluming yourself on your own performances, and on your high deservings of praise from other men, be sure your humiliation will not tarry. You will be disappointed, superseded, overlooked, overstepped, and overriden. It will seem to you that all men plot against you, and it may well be so, for men of principle detest self-assertions.

But why should we let this happen? Let each one lay the Lord's commandment to heart and take the humble place before someone asks us to do so. Beat them to it, by being clothed with humility always and in everything you do. Where opportunity is opened, do the lowly service which others despise, do it in the right spirit, and far from lessening your prestige in the sight of your fellow men the lowly deed will enhance it.

Day by day the little daisy
Looks up with its yellow eye,
Never murmurs, never wishes
It were hanging up on high.

And the air is just as pleasant,
And as bright the sunny sky,
To the daisy on the footpath
As to flowers that bloom on high.

God has given to each his station;
Some have riches and high place,
Some have lowly homes and labors;
All may have His precious grace.

EASTER—Its False and True Meaning

EASTER—by whatever name it may be known—is a theme common to almost every religion and every people. It is usually observed with special rites at a given time of the year. It is expressed not so much in doctrines as in stories, myths, and dramatic rituals having to do with the adventures of hero-gods and other symbolic figures. In western countries people may be seen at Easter-time dressed in their spring finery, wending their way to their favorite place of worship to sentimentally sing the half-forgotten words, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," and to have their memory refreshed by the story of the risen Lord. It is also a convenient excuse for colored eggs, cute bunnies, and new hats—a flame fanned into life by the commercial needs of poultry farmers, candy manufacturers and milliners.

It is not possible to find the story of the egg in the Bible, yet American children and children of western nations hunt around the house for colored eggs and chocolate bunnies on Easter morning. Those responsible for the children's religious training do not realize that the story of the egg goes back to some of the oldest known civilizations on earth—to ancient Egypt and India, where the symbol of the egg plays an important part in mythical accounts of the creation of the world.

The work of the Egyptian gods Geb and Nut was supposed to be the production of a mighty cosmic egg from which the universe was born. The Hindu mythology tells of Prajapati both forming and emerging from the egg, from which the world was born. The Phoenician story of the creation of an egg was likewise formed in Mot, the primeval waters, and, splitting open, the two parts of the shell became heaven and earth.

Human beings are endowed with a mind that can think and reason for itself. Though all reasoning is by no means right, it is this ability that raises men above animals. In ancient times mankind explained away seemingly unanswerable mysteries of nature by superstitious myths. Not knowing why plants sprouted and grew anew each spring, they devised a myth that would explain this phenomenon. Characters in these myths became gods or goddesses according to their fancy. Whether they were called Tam-muz, Adonis, Proserpine, Astarte, Osiris, or any of the many others from different cults, the story is the same. The pagan god is killed and in great grief the goddess follows him to the underworld—the land of the dead, and by her act she causes the earth to cease being fertile; thus they explain winter. But this grief—the Chaldean myth being typical—fills the god of water, with sympathy and Ea causes a heavenly messenger to be sent to the land of the dead to rescue the goddess. This messenger sprinkles the god and goddess with the water of life and gives them power to return to the earth for six months, but for the other six months they again return to the land of the dead until Ea sends again the water of life, so that year after year the miracle of the resurrection would recur. Though this may in some crude form resemble the Easter story, it is in no way connected with it. It is pure coincidence that the resurrection of Christ took place in the spring, the same time as the pagan festivals.

A common theory is that there is some resemblance between the voluntary sacrificial death of Christ and the sacrificial death of the pagan gods. They do not admit His life was taken by cruel murderers to which He sub-

mitted rather than deny His Kingship. They cover with superstitious rubbish the beautiful and inspiring design of God for this planet.

The literal death of Christ was never stressed as a ritual to be revived and worshiped throughout the ages in the form of the Mass or in any other way. Greater far than the literal crucifixion was its prelude—His crucifixion of self, His life of obedience, faith, example. Christ allowed the rabble to take His literal life but He would not deny the Truth. In this He was an example to others to stand by their convictions of God's righteousness even though the resulting persecutions might end in death. He was an example in that He had faith that His Father would keep His Word and the tomb would not forever hold Him. He knew God had power to give Him back the life the mob took from Him. He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17, 18). He is not speaking here of His natural life, but of the laying down of His own ways, desires, thoughts and words. He surrendered that life freely and willingly to God and so left a perfect example for us to follow. He became mentally and morally at one with God, and because of His stainless life He became worthy of being made in God's image physically.

The world is full of superstitious beliefs which have been woven into Christian worship, but it is not God's fault, and if Bible critics would search the Scriptures instead of pagan folklore and cease trying to make the Bible into a pagan myth, then thinking persons would be less apt to discard it as folklore, self-contradictory and undependable as a guide to an assured future life to be enjoyed in physical reality.

Easter is God's promise to His children that death need hold no fears. With His hand in ours, He guides us through the stress and difficulties of mortality to the freedom, the glory and unspeakable joy of a richer, fuller, eternal life. It is an appalling fact that the masses turn their backs on this life-extending promise for the very reason that paganism still extant smothers God's generosity. Mankind's Friend from Nazareth, by His life, left a perfect self-portrait reflecting purpose and determination to be wholly obedient to God, reflecting also courage, kindness, gentleness and goodness. His utter selflessness won for Him freedom from sin, sorrow, death and the pains of mortality. This portrait clearly shines forth from the pages of God's Book for all who will to follow.

Jesus taught that the true follower is one who knows his dependence upon God; when he thinks of self he trembles, but when he looks to God he is strong. The follower is humble; he hungers and thirsts after righteousness; he strives to be at peace with God through obedience to His law; he keeps his eye single; and by treading the narrow path of godliness he brings himself to the grand climax of a Christian's life—immortality. This then is Easter for the Christian—surrendering the natural ways, ambitions and desires of the old man for the noble, inspiring characteristics of the new man which will lead to the eternal life God offers.

Do you wonder that we rejoice with grateful hearts at the marvel and glory of the resurrection of Christ!

Lessons from the ANT



A NOTED American author believed the ant to be fraudulent, a deceiver who works only when someone is watching. From observation he found him unable to stroll around a stump and find his way home again. He described him as the little creature that tugs at heavy objects purely for entertainment, and who, with equally nonsensical abandonment, collects objects worthless enough to cause other ants to covet them. A live one to him was as senseless as a dead one.

On the contrary, the wise man tells us, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."

We find one of the busiest places in the world to be an ant hill. In industry and intelligence the ant is not surpassed even by bees and wasps.

Each worker of an ant colony is assigned his own work which he faithfully performs. Idleness is seldom seen, for it is punished by death. Labor-saving devices are adopted; workers will drop food and building material to other groups below to save carrying. Food is carried by a company of ants when it is too heavy for one.

"The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer" (Prov. 30: 25). We, as Christians, can take a lesson from the lowly ant. We should be working with zeal and enthusiasm as though we appreciated the fact that God has offered a prize worth all our effort.

One of the most frequent warnings we have is to be intense, wholehearted, single-minded in what God wants us to do. No one can do satisfactory temporal work if not interested in it. So in the spiritual our whole heart must be in our work, making every move count to get the most done. Perfect, diligent service must be our desire so we may prove workers the Lord may use in the future.

Ants work hard. They tackle difficult undertakings with the aid of the "engineers" of the colony. Ants have been known to cut their way through ten inches of solid rock. All the workers of the colony are specialists. Those that are best at building spend their full time in construction. Those that cut wood best, do that. Some work only at burrowing into the ground. The largest, commonly act as policemen and defenders of the colony. Rebels, sit-down strikers, gangsters, profiteers, and hi-jackers are seldom seen among the insects.

The members of the body of Christ could be likened to the colony of ants. All do not have the same office. Each has its own particular duty and none other can perform it. In the body of Christ each member must grow to fill his place so that in the grand consummation of the ages all members may be joined together into a perfect man.

God does not require us to fill another man's place, or to do any other man's work. Rather, He wants us to improve our own opportunity according to the ability given us. We shall be held responsible only for this, no more and no less.

Among the ants, large workers, often called soldiers,

with big heads and powerful jaws are useful as defenders of the rest and sometimes as seed-smashers for the smaller and weaker workers. When these soldier-ants go to battle their object is to capture as many enemies as possible, never hesitating to sacrifice themselves for the common good of their fellow ants.

We are told that ants not only herd livestock but understand and exercise the best principles of good farming. A naturalist, wandering in the woods one spring, noticed a patch of rice which was but a few inches high. Closer observation revealed that the patch was without weeds and the soil was loose, as if cultivated. Upon noticing ants darting in and out of the miniature plantation he realized that they were tending its rows in an orderly way. The weeding was done by snipping off the weeds and dragging them away. Some ants were plowing straight down the rows; other husky ants seemed assigned to keep out enemy insects. It measured twenty-four inches high in late August when the ants began to harvest their crop.

Are we, like the ants, taking advantage of the plot we have to cultivate? Everyone knows that weeds choke out the life of the garden and of the productive fields. The gardener and farmer alike, each has to keep the weeding process alive. It is like that in the building and developing of character. No one knows our own faults and tendencies better than we do ourselves, so it is up to each one of us to keep the weeds out, and to keep all growth vigorous and fruitful. Where weeds exist, there can be no fruit-bearing plants. It is for us to pull up the weeds and plant good deeds in their place.

The weeds of our own desires will completely take over our garden unless we keep working, cultivating and breaking up the ground, pulling them out as the clear water of life softens the soil. We cannot work today and take a vacation tomorrow. Weeds never take a vacation, but just keep growing; likewise we must keep working. Spasmodic zeal interspersed with leisure is a dangerous luxury.

It is those who have cultivated, weeded and plowed their furrows straight for whom the Lord is waiting. Some will not be fully ripened or developed; many will be blighted and withered, with much chaff. But His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner and destroy the chaff.

We shall reap just as we sow, and the sowing days are few. The reaping time is almost here. Will our harvest be of value or will it be worthless chaff, fit only to be destroyed?

Ants have an instinct of acting together. Soldier-ants often make up in numbers what they lack in strength. When several have seized the enemy and taken hold they will suffer themselves to be cut in pieces rather than to let go. This persistence helps them win many a battle with larger ants.

(Continued on page 25)





Michael's Mistake

A Story for Children

THE HOUSEHOLD of Lazarus, the rich sheep owner, was in a continual state of excitement in the closing days of the old year. The winter season had been unusually cold and wet, and the good neighbors of Jericho spent much time discussing whether indeed the climate did not seem to be changing; what with all this damp cloudy weather they had been having lately. The household of Lazarus consisted of himself, his kind wife, Esther, their eight year old daughter, Martha, and ten year old son, Michael; also numerous hired hands to help with the many tasks to be done around the homestead.

For many years it had been the custom of the family to visit their family village at the time of the New Moon Feast and yearly sacrifice, along with as many of their relatives as were able to make the annual trip. Now the time was getting short and there were many chores to be done before the family could start the journey. There were new clothes to be made, foods to be prepared; and the coming of the New Moon was only about a week hence. The children were busily engaged making plans for the joyous occasion. It took the combined efforts of both mother, and father Lazarus to remind them of the work yet to be done before they could go. As the Lazarus family lived only about an easy day's journey from Bethlehem, other relatives from the northern towns were in the habit of meeting at their farm and then proceeding onward together in one company.

But we are getting ahead of our story. Before this journey starts, the sheep must be prepared for spring pasture.

Martha and Michael skipped along by their father's side as they made their way out to the sheepfold. It was nearing the end of the cold, rainy season; the smell of springtime was in the air. The voice of the turtledove was heard along the creek banks, and all nature seemed ready to burst out into flowering buds and green blades of tender grass. The sheep had been in their winter quarters since the cold rains began some months before. As the eager children reached the sheepfold and began petting and calling out to their favorite animals, it was very plain to see that even the sheep realized that the long winter

was about over and were anxious to nibble once more on the newly sprouted grass in the pasture.

The first turning out of the sheep was a special occasion in the Lazarus family—an event eagerly anticipated. It meant that nature would again provide luxuriant feed for the hungry animals to eat, right near home, before the droughts of summer would turn the pastures on the plains to a brown color, and make it necessary to take the flock into the far-away hills in search for fresh feeding grounds.

Good hay had been scarce the past winter and it was necessary to carefully ration the amount the sheep received each day. But the children had taken special care of their chosen pets and provided them with a few choice handfuls whenever the opportunity presented itself. Now on this lovely day there was an important job to be done, a work in which their father had promised the children that they could help him and the other workmen. Each sheep must be carefully inspected in order to see that it had not suffered any injuries while staying in the crowded pens during the winter months.

"Father," said Michael, as the inspection job was nearly finished, "may I stay with the sheep and watch over them the first day? We can stay near home; the pasture down near the creek is almost green with new grass. Please, Father."

Mr. Lazarus gazed affectionately at his older child, now nearly ten years old. He was glad to see him take an interest in the farm life. What hopes he had for this boy! Yes, it was time to train him to assume more responsibility. A day in the fields, overseeing the sheep, would probably teach him more than a day spent in the classroom of Rabbi Obadiah. True, there were other hired men who could oversee the sheep, but then again the training would be good for the boy, because he had acquired a habit of becoming careless when asked to perform certain little errands. In fact, Michael found it a very convenient excuse to say, "Oh, I'm very sorry, but I just forgot to do it." Yes, a day with the sheep might be very good training indeed. Mr. Lazarus took so long to answer that Michael was afraid the answer would be "No, you should attend to your studies." Therefore, he was very happy when he received his father's permission to go with the sheep on this very first day of the new grazing season.

"Now remember, Michael," said Mr. Lazarus, "I do not want the sheep to be allowed to graze more than a few hours this first day. They must get used to a diet of green grass after a winter on dry hay. Return with the flock when I blow the horn and wave to you from the roof of the house. Now remember my instructions!"

Michael readily promised to carry out every order and

carefully started for a near-by pasture lot. He had felt for some time that he was growing up, and this must be a sure sign. Never before had he been trusted to herd the flock alone. He had studied very diligently during the winter months after traveling through the mud of their unpaved road to the near-by village where Rabbi Obadiah had conducted a school of learning for children of well-to-do parents.

How good it felt to be out in the open, with the warm rays of the sun fairly steaming the moisture out of the wet earth. The sheep would make short runs here and there as if to make the most of their first day of freedom from the confining pens in the sheepfold. This job of tending the sheep proved to be even easier than Michael had expected. For the most part the animals seemed to attend to themselves, keeping busy nibbling at the tender green shoots of grass. After an hour or so, shortly after he had eaten his lunch, Michael began to feel just a trifle sleepy. The warm rays of the sun, the warm breeze from the southwest, the gentle bleating of the small lambs, seemed to invite him to take just a short rest. There was a large, flat, dry rock near-by that the sun had warmed, and it looked so inviting.

He had often heard that the shepherd must ever be on the alert when the sheep were entrusted to his care. But the little lambs and sheep were doing so well and behaving so nicely; surely he could rest for just a little while. So Michael went over to the stone and sat down upon it. It would be so interesting to lie and watch the fleecy clouds float across the pale blue sky; so he lay backward and gazed upward. At times he raised himself into a sitting position in order to take a look at the sheep, but all appeared to be going well with them. He closed his eyes for just a few minutes in order to rest them, and before he realized it, he was fast asleep. And while he was in this condition the flock wandered off toward the creek for a drink of fresh water.

While Michael slept, his father blew and blew upon the ram's horn and waved his arms. He was greatly upset because the sheep seemed to be going farther and farther away instead of returning to the sheep sheds. Becoming alarmed for the safety of his son and the welfare of his flock, he hurriedly started for the pasture lot to find out what was happening. And the first thing Michael knew he heard a voice calling, "Michael, Michael, where are you?" Quickly sitting up and rubbing the sleep from his eyes, he recognized the voice as his father's. The sheep by this time had wandered a long, long way off. Suddenly he felt very ashamed of himself. Rising to his feet, he called loudly, "Here I am, Father, over by the sycamore trees."

As his father drew closer to him, Michael began to think about just what kind of excuse he would give for going to sleep and neglecting to watch the flock. Somehow he felt it would not be too easy to explain the matter, after his father had placed this trust in him and given him a chance to prove he was growing into a dependable young man. Soon he heard his father say, "Son, what was the trouble? Surely you could hear me blow the signal to you."

Knowing his father expected a prompt reply, Michael quickly answered, "Oh, I am so sorry, Father, but you see the day was so warm that I just lay back and closed my eyes for a moment and I must have fallen asleep. I

did not hear even one blast of the horn. The first thing I remember was your calling me."

Michael told the whole truth, which is just what he should have done. To tell a "fib" about it would only have made matters worse. Still, his tone and manner showed that he did not take it very seriously; it was just another mistake, which would soon be forgotten. Mr. Lazarus, being a wise father, decided that his boy needed a lesson he would long remember, in order that he might grow up into a good man. He resolved to carry out a certain plan within the next few days and give his careless son a surprise he would not forget. So he just said, "Michael, do you realize what could have happened to the flock while you were in that sleepy condition? I thought you were getting old enough to be trusted. If one of the hired men did such a thing I would have to discharge him immediately."

Michael felt greatly humiliated, but all he could think to say was, "I'm terribly sorry, Father. I just forgot you might be blowing the horn at any moment."

"You must learn to take your responsibilities more seriously," replied his father. "Now quickly run down and herd the sheep back toward home."

Later on, at the time of their evening meal, his sister Martha said to him, "Michael, did you bring me some of those beautiful flowers that grow along the stream in the springtime? You remember I asked you to."

And Michael, who at the moment happened to be buttering a slice of fresh homemade bread, said, "O Martha, I'm so sorry, but I forgot all about picking that bouquet of flowers for you. Come to think of it, there were some very nice ones there, too."

After supper Mrs. Lazarus said to her son, "Michael, did you get that pattern of the cloak from Aunt Ruth? You know you promised to get it today."

Again Michael was placed in the familiarly uncomfortable position. Truly he had been so pleased at being allowed to go with the sheep that all other promises had been crowded from his mind. What would sound better than his old excuse! So he said, "O, Mother, I am so sorry, but I just forgot all about running that errand."

And thus it was time after time that Michael, who wanted to be treated as a grown-up man, could hardly be trusted to perform the duties of a small child. And still he used these childish excuses. Mr. Lazarus took note of all this and resolved to put his plan into action.

The days just seemed to fly by, and soon the aunts and uncles and cousins began to arrive. All were willing to help with the work, and the spirit of good will and good fellowship prevailed everywhere and in everyone. That is in everyone but Michael. In the excitement of meeting and greeting this cousin and that cousin, he still conveniently forgot the numerous little duties requested of him. Finally the day came when the many families were ready to start their journey to Bethlehem. But somehow, Mr. Lazarus discovered that more food would have to be delivered to their hired man who by now was grazing the sheep almost four miles away from the home farm. Calling Michael to him, he said, "Son, do you think you are man enough to take this food and message to Adam and get back here promptly because we are going to start almost any time now, just as soon as Aunt Mary, Uncle Joseph and Cousin Jesus arrive. Do you think you can deliver it and hurry back without delay?"

"Of course I can do it," said Michael.

"Better get started then right away," replied his father. "And be sure you do not waste any time; otherwise you may get a surprise."

Again Michael rejoiced at the chance to prove himself a man, and, calling his dog, Nero, he started off, leading the donkey which was loaded with supplies. Remembering the need for haste, he walked rapidly, the donkey plodded along, and within an hour he had found the shepherd and the flock. Adam was pleased to receive the extra food and thanked the young master for his father's thoughtfulness. Michael rested a few minutes and then retraced his steps toward home. He had gone about a mile down the road when suddenly his dog, Nero, raced over to a hole in the ground and began digging furiously. Of course Michael was quick to follow his dog and tried to find out what was causing his dog to carry on so much. Nero would dig awhile, then sniff, then bark, then dig some more. And he kept this up until he had a hole large enough to hide himself in.

Michael forgot that he should hurry back, and urged the dog on to find whatever was at the bottom of the den. The boy wished he had a shovel to dig with, then he would be able to help his dog. He searched around for a suitable stick of wood, but none could be found. A group of neighbors passed on down the road and waved to him, and he called back that he thought his dog was about to catch a fox. There were other holes that seemed to be connected to the main one, and Nero took turns digging and smelling at these holes also. In this way several hours passed. All at once the dog decided that the fun was over and started off down the road toward home. As the boy and the dog neared the farmhouse, the place appeared deserted. And all of a sudden, Michael, the boy who so easily forgot, remembered why he had been told to hurry.

Now he fairly flew toward the house. As he ran he called out, "Mother, Father, Martha, Cousin James, Cousin John." But there was no answering voice. Quickly stepping into the house, he saw there was no one home. How could they have gone away and forgotten him! But he soon discovered a note on the table. With a fearful heart and shaking hands he read the following words:

To our dear son, Michael,

Perhaps you did not realize it, but delivering the food to Adam, the shepherd, was a test to try you. If you had returned promptly you would be with us now as we start on this journey. Neighbor Matthew passed by and told us he saw you playing in an open field near some fox holes, so we will try not to worry about you while we are away. Cousin Jesus was especially sorry you failed in this test. He acts and talks like an exceptional young man, and as you know, expects to celebrate his twelfth birthday tomorrow, and will be assuming the obligations of manhood. How proud we will be when our son outgrows his childish ways and follows in his cousin's footsteps. We will miss you greatly, but we also felt something should be done to make a lasting impression on your mind. Do you think we have succeeded? Anna, the housekeeper, went with us as far as the village. She will be back before suppertime with supplies and prepare your meals and watch over you. Study your lessons and, God willing, we will be back home with you in a few days.

Your loving mother and father.

At first Michael was filled with despair and woe. Why, O why, did he loiter along the way? At first he was inclined to blame the dog for stopping, but being, after all, a sensible lad, he realized that he could have easily called the dog and kept on his way. No, the fault was all with him; he had been the one who was forgetful. And as the days passed, he firmly resolved that his family would see a great change in him when they returned home. He would show them that he was growing up and would develop into a good, strong man like Cousin Jesus. He would let his father and mother know that he could be trusted.

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Now, boys and girls, have you ever used those forgetting excuses like Michael used them? It is something we can all give heed to and receive a lesson. Being heedless and willingly forgetful are ugly habits that you know make us unhappy now and only lead to greater unhappiness later in life. Plant the seeds of Truth now in your minds, work over them daily, and then as your birthdays come and go, you will find yourselves daily enjoying fruits of righteousness.

Mistakes

I've made "mistakes"—just the same as you;
The same "mistakes" that all mortals do;
Just little "mistakes," and big "mistakes"—
Bringing us little and big heartaches;
Bringing us sorrow and sighs and tears;
Some of them shadowing all our years;
Turning life's song to a sad refrain—
Let's try to forget them, and start again!

Let's turn our thoughts to the future, friend,
And let the "past," with its sorrows, end;
Let's turn our eyes to a brighter day,
And let the bitterness fade away;
I've made "mistakes"—just the same as you.
And millions of souls have made them, too;
We've made "mistakes," like all mortal men—
Let's try to forget them, and smile again!

Mistakes are bad, but they should not make
Men to turn back, or their faith to shake;
Who never makes, as the years go by,
Mistakes, through life, as the moments fly,
Does nothing at all, either good or bad;
Does nothing to make his brother glad.
But let this be our watchword, men,
Don't make the same mistakes again!

Let us turn away from the yesteryears,
And cease our sighing, and dry our tears;
What's done is done, and we can't turn back—
Let's bravely start down the future track,
And sternly strive to efface, erase
"Mistakes" we've made, and with smiling face
Do what we can to help other men
Who've made "mistakes," to take heart again!
—Selected and Amplified.

The New Passover and Its Significance

THE feast of the Passover as kept by the Children of Israel in the Wilderness, by the Israelite nation during the reigns of the judges and the kings, and by their Jewish descendants in the days of Jesus, was in commemoration of their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Plague after plague was visited upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the lice, the hail, the frogs, the waters turned to blood. But Pharaoh was obdurate. With the advent of each plague he would relent; with its termination he would harden his heart and refuse to let Israel go.

The last and most disastrous of the plagues was the death of the firstborn in every family of the Egyptians. The Lord, knowing this catastrophe would bring to a head the decision to let the Israelites go, marked out a program for them in advance. It was to fall on the night of the fourteenth of Abib, the first month of the year to them. On that night the destroying angel would pass through the land and smite with death the firstborn of every family of Egypt.

To assure their own safety the Israelites were bidden to strike a swatch of blood on the doorpost at the entrance of their houses. Upon seeing the blood the destroying angel would "pass over" the inmates of that house, "sparing them from penalty and calamity."

The Children of Israel were commanded to observe the day as a yearly feast, and to pay attention to all the rites and ceremonies which the Lord had commanded.

They still were keeping the Passover in the days of Jesus, for when He was twelve years old He accompanied His parents to that feast at Jerusalem. And again, the priestly clique who plotted Jesus' death made haste to get their abominable work completed before the close of Abib thirteenth, as the commandment forbade any secular work on Passover day, which was also the second Sabbath of the year.

Jesus instituted His new Passover, the bread and wine, one day earlier, on the thirteenth day of the first month, Abib, as the following sketch of events proves. In Bible times the day was reckoned from evening to evening in place of from midnight to midnight as we now reckon it. Hence, Abib 12 ended with sundown, and the thirteenth began. The first event of that memorable day was the Supper in the Upper Room. After the supper Jesus addressed them. The text of His forceful discourse fills four chapters of the gospel of St. John. Then followed the trip to Gethsemane, His prayer and agony in the garden, the betrayal by Judas, His arraignment before Annas and Caiaphas. These events took place on the night of the thirteenth. The morning of the thirteenth He was taken before Pilate, then sent to Herod, and back to Pilate again, then condemned to die, and by the sixth hour or noon He had been placed on the cross. By the ninth hour or three o'clock He was dead, and in the remaining three hours of the day He was removed from the cross, placed in Joseph's new tomb, a great stone was placed at the tomb's mouth, the stone was sealed, guards were set, and by sundown the people had returned to their homes to begin the celebration of the Passover feast, Abib 14.

The first Passover meal was associated with crisis. Upon leaving Egypt each family was to prepare a lamb for the last meal in Egypt. It was to be roasted in readi-

ness for the midnight meal. The meal was to be eaten in haste with their shoes on their feet and their staff in their hand. It was a time for action, not a time for delay and postponement. Likewise urgency is an ever present factor in the life of a Christian. Every word of God must be eaten, digested, assimilated. To accomplish this in one short lifetime, or that portion of one's life remaining after entering God's service, demands haste.

Crisis also accompanied Jesus' new Passover. Following the Supper they went out into the darkness of the night. It was a testing time for Jesus, and for His disciples as well. While Jesus went into the garden to pray, He left them to watch. Three times He returned to find them sleeping. The seriousness of the occasion had not yet dawned upon their confused minds.

Today we who name the name of Christ are obliged to journey through life surrounded by spiritual darkness. Our blessed Master is removed a little way from us and we know not the moment of His return. He has bidden us to stay awake and watch, "lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Times without number we have grown weary in well doing and succumbed to the desire for a "little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep"; for ease, for release from constant effort and vigilance. During these periods of spiritual inattentiveness the betrayer may enter to place the deceitful kiss on the cheek of the One we call Master and Lord, and in that way we allow the Son of God to be crucified afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

We learn from Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians that the Passover is a yearly event, and that it is an evening observance. How incongruous to celebrate the Lord's *Supper* in the morning! Listen to Paul's words: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (I Cor. 11: 23, 24). The statement "the same night," establishes two points: the Lord's Passover was an evening observance, and also a yearly observance. The anniversary of that "same night" could occur once yearly only.

The bread and juice of the grape partaken of at the Lord's supper are symbolic, merely emblems with a deeper significance. The bread represents the word of life, and the blood, the living out of that word. After the Supper Jesus went out to suffer, and before the cycle of another day was complete He was dead and resting in Joseph's new tomb. Hence the emblems symbolize suffering and death. In Scriptural phraseology the blood is the life of the flesh, this also is a well-known scientific fact. With the Christian a life must be taken, the life of the "old man" of the flesh. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6: 6). In partaking of the Lord's Supper we renew our covenant to suffer a complete death to sin, to cease making provision for the flesh to fulfill any of its unlawful desires.

And lastly, a seriousness must accompany the renewing of our covenant, or partaking of the Lord's Supper.

It is not a compact to be entered into lightly or without due consideration. A stern warning is issued to mankind by the Eternal in Eccl. 5: 1, 2, 4, 5, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil." He then prescribes caution in making vows to Him: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." But a vow once made becomes a binding instrument: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

A man who fails to keep his word is frowned upon by honest men, and the Lord's attitude toward the man who dishonors his agreement would be equally denunciatory. The language Paul uses in I Cor. 11: 27—29 is clear and forceful: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat of this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

When we partake of this cup we agree to live up to its demands in the full or take the consequences of our failure. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil," said the Eternal through the great Lawgiver, Moses. After we agree to accept the challenge of death and *live* for God, we either must live up to our covenant or suffer the penalty for our breach of promise. It is a fearful thing to break a promise we have made to God.

SIMPLICITY — ITS BEAUTY

(Continued from page 16)

It is human nature to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. It is human nature to become so entangled with the superficial that the weightier matters are pushed into second place. When we become overly anxious, tired and flustered over the nice thing we are doing for the Lord, His kind and thoughtful reminder reclothes us in our rightful mind: "Something simple will do just as well. Stop your frenzied rushing and come, relax, and let's talk about the one thing that really matters." All our activities in the Lord's work are but a means to an end—to perfect holiness. Let them not become an end in themselves. Let us not become so encumbered in serving Him that we have no time simply to sit at His feet and listen to the words of life.

"Be with me, Lord, where'er my path may lead;
Fill with Thy word, supply my every need;
Help me to live each day more close to Thee,
And, O dear Lord, I pray, abide with me."

LESSONS FROM THE ANT

(Continued from page 20)

As Christians, we are engaged in a spiritual warfare. Let us look at a portrait of the happy warrior. Mark the nature of his armory! The sin-resistant armor which has successfully defied the enemy ever since man was, is his defence. But, "you cannot fight the French merely with red uniforms, there must be men inside them." Nor will these implements of our spiritual warfare rout the enemies of themselves. The armor must encase a man who is a man, and knows how to use his weapons.

Thus the "happy warrior" fights. His weapons are not carnal. He fights with truth and righteousness and peace, faith and prayer.

A variation of the usual technique employed by ants who would have the work done for them is the practice of slave making. As regularly and systematically as army ants make their food-finding forays, the blood-red ants make their raids on the black ants' nest. When the red snatchers discover a nest, a few enter and soon tear it open. Most of the larvae and pupae are carried off by the reds into slavery.

When the captured pupae mature and black workers emerge into a world of red ants instead of their native black ants, they accept the situation easily enough. They seem blissfully unaware of their color and at once enter into the working routine of the red ants' nest.

The world with its vain pleasures and allurements is ever seeking to enter into our lives and lure us into its destructive whirlpool. This is a gradual process; if not constantly on guard, we will soon be unaware of our condition and enter into the routine of the world. We must never allow ourselves to become contented with self; to do so is to invite disaster. If content with the progress we are making it will lull us into a deceived slumber.

The natural tendency is to drift with the tide. Watching self is a task very distasteful to the "old man." We naturally think self to be rather trustworthy, with little need of watching. It is necessary therefore to realize and believe that in our flesh dwells no good thing.

Will we let these evils conquer us, make slaves of us? To avoid disaster we must maintain our enthusiasm and pull against the current with all our mind, might and strength.

The opportunity to observe these fascinating creatures of the insect world is extended to every one of us. It is no wonder God tells us to go to the ant and consider her ways. Surely we can learn many valuable lessons from the lowly creature, which if heeded and applied to ourselves will aid us on the road to Eternal Life.

The little sharp vexations,
And the briars that catch and fret,
Why not take all to the Helper
Who has never failed us yet?
Tell Him about the heartache,
And tell Him the longings too;
Tell Him the baffled purpose
When we scarce know what to do;
Then leaving all our weakness
With the One divinely strong,
Forget that we bore the burden,
And carry away the song. —Sel.

IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?

TO A VAST NUMBER of people death is a vague, unreal, far-distant something that always happens to someone else, a distant possibility that can be worried about at a later date. But death is real; it respects neither young, middle-aged, nor old, ruler nor subject, rich nor poor. Death with but few exceptions has been the grim and relentless reaper of all humanity. Every day thousands are dying as the result of accidents, old age, disease and starvation, and every day thousands of new lives are coming into being. Every living organism follows the pattern of birth, growth, maturity, decay, and finally death. What then is this thing called life, and the equally important event called death?

There are many different ideas about what happens at death. To some, this life is but a brief sojourn between two eternities of oblivion. To others, life is to prepare for the hereafter, according to the individual's religious convictions. To many, death is merely a separation of body and soul, with the real or conscious "ego" or "soul" living on and continuing life under different circumstances. Still others believe in "the eventual communion of all souls with God": there is no eternal torment, but the soul is at first in a state of deep remorse for sins committed in life, and as it becomes more fully convinced and repentant and more spiritual it is allowed to progress with the passage of time to a higher plane until at last it reaches the highest plane where God dwells. And while many believe the soul goes directly to heaven or hell at death, some teach there are three places, hell, purgatory, and heaven for the soul's abode. Still a few believe that there is one place—the grave—and that a resurrection is needed to impart immortality to human beings.

Since this thing theologians call an "immortal soul" is not something that can be found by any means of science, or by any amount of laboratory testing, nor yet located with the X-ray or fluoroscope, and even the religionists disagree widely and dispute hotly as to its real form and destination, we will turn to the Bible, God's revelation to man, for the answer to our inquiries.

"Soul," as Used in the Bible

We will first turn and read Gen. 2:7, "Then God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." Not that man has a soul, but man *is* a soul. Before the "breath of life" was added, he was a dead soul. In Ezekiel 18:4, 20 we find that "The soul that sinneth, it [the soul] shall die." The word "soul," which in the Hebrew is *nephesh*, is defined: "Breath, breath of life by which the body lives, the token of which life is drawing breath, hence life, vital principle. . . . The soul is also said both to live and to die; to be killed . . . the mind as the seat of the senses, affections and various emotions . . . every living thing. . . . Specially it is a man, a person, in a census of the people as 70 souls, 70 persons. It is sometimes I, myself, thou, thyself." In Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*, we read: "The Hebrew word *nephesh* of the Old Testament occurs about 700 times, and is rendered soul 471 times, life and living about 150 times, and the same word is also translated a man, a person, self, they, me, him, anyone, breath, heart, mind, appetite, the body, dead or alive, creature, beast. It is 28 times used or applied to

beasts, and every creeping thing. The Greek word *psuchee* of the New Testament corresponds with *nephesh* of the Old Testament. It occurs 105 times, is rendered soul 59 times, life 40 times. The same word is also rendered mind, heart, and is twice applied to the beasts that perish. Perhaps it may be worthy of notice that in all the 700 times which *nephesh* occurs and in the 105 times of *psuchee* not once are the words immortal, immortality, deathless, or never-dying found in connection as qualifying terms." The lexicographer cites Num. 31:19 which reads, "And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person (*nephesh*)." In similar connections *nephesh* is translated person or persons 24 times. See Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6; 9:6, 7, 10; 19:11, 13, 16.

Scientific Observations

The foregoing definitions of soul are in full accord with science. Take for instance the two men who were critically injured in an accident. One received a fractured skull; the other, internal injuries from which he was hemorrhaging severely, necessitating prompt surgery, in the preparation of which the man's heart stopped beating. After futile efforts to start it, the patient is pronounced dead. Hurried last-minute preparations are made, the body opened, the doctor massages the still heart, forcing the blood to begin to flow once more. After a few minutes a weak, pulsating fluttering of the heart muscles is felt; gradually as the massaging continues, a regular, steady pulse develops. The heart of the dead person is functioning once more. Now if there were such a thing as a "soul" which leaves the body at death and goes off to its reward, where was this man's "soul" during the time he was dead? Heaven, hell, or purgatory?

Let us now consider the second survivor, the man with the fractured skull. He lay unconscious for about nine days until the hands of a skilled surgeon lifted the piece of bone. As the pressure was released, the man called out, "Hang on, Jane, hang on for your life!" Afterward when the surgeon told him what he had said, the man looked surprised, replying, "Why, I was just going to say that to my wife when we were hit." Here is proof that no thought had passed the brain since the accident; but if the theory were true that the "soul" is something conscious and apart from the body, why would it have affected the man in such a way that he was unable to think, articulate, see, hear or smell? If it is impossible to think with an injured brain, how can a person think without any? And if we cannot learn anything without our five senses, how is it possible for us to learn or retain knowledge after all the five senses are destroyed in death? All true science is upheld by the Bible as is evident by the inspired words found in Job. 4:17; Ps. 30:9; 6:5; 88:10—12; 115:17; 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 10; Isa. 38:18, 19.

What is death? We find Webster defines death as: "Deprived of life; opposed to alive and living; reduced to that state of being in which the organs of motion and life have irrevocably ceased to perform their functions." The lungs, the heart and every vital organ, work to generate and sustain vitality and impart activity to the various faculties with which we are endowed. Apart from this busy organism life is unmanifested, whether in man or beast. Shock the brain and insensibility ensues; take away

air, and suffocation follows; cut off the supply of food, and starvation occurs. Could these effects be produced if life were a thing apart from those physical causes?

Spirit — Breath of Life

Many quote Eccl. 12: 7 to prove the conscious state of the dead. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." What is the spirit that leaves the body at death? The original word translated "spirit" in Eccl. 12: 7 is *ruach*. The Hebrew Lexicon defines it: "To breathe, breath of air, to blow, especially with the mouth, breath of the nostrils, to breathe, air in motion . . . breath of life, the vital principle which shows itself in the breathing of the mouth and nostrils." The lexicographer also gives Eccl. 12: 7, "The spirit (*ruach*) returns to God who gave it." Spirit and breath are used interchangeably. The Hebrew word occurs 400 times in the Old Testament, is rendered spirit 240 times, breath 28, wind 95, mind 6. The Greek word translated spirit is *pneuma* and its first definitions are: "Wind, the air we breathe, breath, to collect breath, also breathing, respiration."

In Luke 8 we are told of a ruler who came to Jesus asking him to come and heal his daughter. Shortly, they were met with the news that she had died. When Jesus entered the house He went into the maid's room and, taking her by the hand, called, "Maid, arise! and her spirit [*pneuma*, breath] came again, and she arose straightway." Without the breath of life she was dead.

Origin of the "Immortal Soul" Theory

Some may ask, If the Bible does not teach that man has an immortal soul, where did it originate?

The belief in apparitions has its history in ancient laws and literature, in the customs and superstitions of savages, and in the fireside ghost stories. It is safe to assert that there are few savage people who do not believe their dead ancestors appear to them in dreams, and in what they think the clearer vision of trances, and who do not prove their belief by sacrifices of food, by prayers for help and by the weird dances to scare off the evil spirits. The widespread graves of extinct races, with weapons and vessels, and in some cases even boats to transport them on their journey through space to their eternal abode, demonstrate that these nameless, vanquished hordes also held that the life of the dead persisted with its old needs and desires. The primitive savage, safely housed in his village, goes forth in dreams at night to visit happy hunting-grounds or to wage war in countries far removed from the place where his body lies. How inevitable then is his assumption that he has a soul, separate from his body, which can leave the house of flesh at will, traverse great distances and return again!

The Greek liked to borrow the ideas of other nations that appealed to them, rearrange them to suit themselves, then pass them on as their own; so it is not surprising to find them introducing into an already apostatizing Christianity the pagan and Egyptian belief of the immortality of the soul. Socrates, a great Greek philosopher, even journeyed to Egypt to consult the Egyptians, and after his return he taught the pagan error to Plato, his most famous pupil.

Let us compare a paragraph from Plato's famous book,

the *Phaedo*, with the beliefs on the subjects of many churches of today.

"The soul whose inseparable attribute is life will never admit to life's opposite, death. Thus the soul is shown to be immortal, indestructible. Do we believe there is such a thing as death? To be sure. And is this anything but the separation of the soul and body? And being dead is the attainment of this separation, when the soul exists in herself and separate from the body, and the body is parted from the soul. That is death. Death is merely the separation of the body and soul."

But for at least two centuries the Christian church continued to teach and believe that man was mortal, just as the prophets had declared and Christ and the apostles had taught. An early Catholic by the name of Justin Martyr, who died about A. D. 166, wrote: "But our Jesus Christ, being crucified, and dead, and having ascended to heaven, reigned; and by those things which were published in his name among all nations by the apostles, there is joy offered to those who expect immortality promised by him" (Anti-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 176). But a little later we are reading that the school of professing Christians in Alexandria adopted Platonism plus the Bible as their creed. An eminent teacher, Origen, wrote, "Souls are immortal," and signed himself, "The Platonist, who believes in the immortality of the soul" (Vol. IV, p. 314, 402). Tertullian was another important teacher who was carried away with Platonism: "For some things are known, even by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many. I may use therefore, the opinion of a Plato, when he declares: 'Every soul is immortal'" (Vol. III, p. 547).

In Vol. IV, p. 440, is mentioned another Catholic named Arnobias, who denounced those who were "carried away with an extravagant opinion of themselves that souls are immortal." But finally the last contender for mortality of the soul was overcome, and in the year 1513 the Catholic church issued a stern decree against all those who dared "to assert concerning the nature of the reasonable soul that it is mortal; all so teaching are to be punished as heretics."

Doctrine of Mortality

The doctrine of mortality is one of reason, justice and mercy. Mortality allows for the final destruction of all sin and sinners, and then the words of Zeph. 3: 15, "Thou shalt not see evil any more," will become a reality. Isaiah (13: 9) and Nahum (1: 9) both assure us, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh . . . to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners out of it. He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time." The "utter end" of sin means more to God than the eternal torment of the wicked. God says, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, wherefore turn yourselves and live ye" (Ezek. 18: 32). If God finds no pleasure in the death of the wicked, surely He would find torture even more repulsive. The death of the wicked is a necessity. There is suffering in the process, but justice does not call for eternal torment. For the little evil man can do in this short life God would be unjust to punish him in the flames of hell for eternity. The Prophet Malachi gives us a description of this fire (4: 1, 3). Notice the wicked are totally consumed by God's judgments—brought to nothing.

The Resurrection

Job posed a question that should prove of vital interest. "If a man die, shall he live again?" Not, If a man die, shall he live right on? but "shall he live again?" Now let us find out if the worthies of old expected to live again by a resurrection, and what proof we have for believing they did. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust . . . and the earth shall cast out the dead. . . . Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. . . . Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. . . . But God shall redeem my soul from the power of the grave. . . . And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. . . . Lord, thou hast brought my soul from the grave. . . . Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. . . . I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. . . . These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Job 14: 2, 10, 13—15; Isa. 26: 19; Job 19: 25—27; John 5: 25, 28, 29; Ps. 49: 15; Dan. 12: 2, 13; Ps. 30: 3; Luke 14: 14; John 11: 24; Heb. 11: 4—13; Acts 24: 21, 15; I Cor. 15: 51).

The only real hope as taught by the prophets, apostles and Jesus was to attain to a resurrection: "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection. . . . If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3: 10, 11). Paul further reasoned with those who in his day scoffed at the idea of a resurrection: "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised . . . then they which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Cor. 15: 16—19). If they possessed an immortal soul how could they be said to have perished?

If it were not for the resurrection we would "be as though we had not been." We would have no preeminence above the beast, if Christ failed to come the second time with our reward, for man and beast both share the same temporary, physical life which is supplied by the blood and the breath of life. See Eccl. 3: 18—20; Ps. 49: 12; 14: 20.

Immortality — Conditional

Paul tells us eternal life will be given "to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality" (Rom. 2: 7). We must "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. . . . In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began. . . . And this is the promise he hath promised us, even eternal life" (Phil. 2: 12; Titus 1: 2; I John 2: 25). How can you promise a man that which is already his own?

There are five places in the Bible where the word immortality is used: I Tim. 6: 15, 16; II Tim. 1: 10; Rom. 2: 7; I Cor. 15: 20, 53, 54. In each case it is something that is brought to light, that must be obtained, sought for. Of this Adamic race Christ is the only one that now has immortality, He being the first fruits of them which sleep, and the only one who can now cry, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Excelsior

The easy roads are crowded
And the level roads are jammed;
The pleasant little rivers
With the drifting folks are crammed.
But off yonder where it's rocky,
Where you get a better view,
You will find the ranks are thinning
And the travelers are few.
Where the going's smooth and pleasant
You will always find the throng;
For the many, more's the pity,
Seem to like to drift along.
But the steeps that call for courage,
And the task that's hard to do,
In the end result in glory
For the never-wavering few.

What Is The Bible?

The Bible is not simply a book. It is a library of the world's greatest books of history, of biography, of prophecy, of poetry, of instruction, of inspiration, of saving power. The books forming this unique library are separate one from another and were written by many different authors at different times, yet they all are essentially related, interdependent, mutually corroborative, and their writing was guided and inspired by the Spirit of the Almighty Himself. Together, these books are so wide in scope, so rich in inexhaustible treasure, so vital in relation to our busy life of today and our more abundant life of the endless to-morrow, that we should diligently study to gain a clearer and fuller revelation of their meanings. If we lay hold, with sure and confident grasp, upon the wisdom and power of this great library, and possess ourselves of its truth and its key to eternal life and joy, it will bring to us an unspeakable blessing.

This wonderful Library of God's word makes wise the simple, is more to be desired than fine gold, is sweeter than honey, inspires hope in the fainting soul, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, comforts in affliction, cleanses and sanctifies and saves, blesses all nations, and opens the very gates into the wondrous Kingdom of God.

The Question of the Ages

What Must I Do to be Saved?

This question has been in the minds of the religious world for ages. Indeed, it is the most important question in life, for when this mortal life is over, what would not a man give to be assured of life hereafter!

In reply to the above question the Apostle Paul once said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Upon this statement many perverted theories for salvation have been built, principally, that one needs but to believe that Christ's death on the cross atoned for the sins of humanity, and salvation is assured.

But the statement has a far deeper meaning.

Belief in Jesus first of all signifies the necessity of a knowledge of the way of life Jesus taught. "He that is of God heareth God's words" (John 8:47). This is the rule Jesus laid down to decide who is of God, and this rule should guide us. If we do not hear the words of God we are not one of His people. Wisdom, then, is the principal thing (Prov. 4:7) in our approach to God. With this agree the words of the apostles:

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:2, 3).

Knowledge of the way of salvation is but the first step we must take to be saved. Knowledge creates faith, and faith to be effective must have works. The sacred writers speak thus:

"If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

"He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him.... Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 2:4; 3:3).

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

"But God be thanked . . . ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17, 18).

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Nothing will make us free from sin but to know the truth and obey it.

When we have taken these two steps, knowledge and obedience, then we have done all that God requires of us. The final step in our salvation is taken by God. When Christ returns and gathers His elect of all ages He will grant unto them eternal life. He will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). That is the salvation we want, freedom from ignorance, freedom from sin, and freedom from the chains of mortality.

What must I do to be saved? Believe, obey, and wait for the coming of our Redeemer.

He Knows

Kind hearts and gentle friends,
The old year came, and now it ends,
With all its goods, and all its woes,
With all its past, the Father knows.

*All we've done, and said, and thought,
And what we've dreamed, and what we've sought;
Whether we've been straight and square and true,
With qualities fine, He knows that too.*

The way we've felt toward one another,
If we've treated each as Christ's own brother;
If we've remembered the Golden Rule,
The Father knows. We're in His school.

*If we've been kind to those alone,
As kind as God is with His own,
If we've shown the love He to us shows,
If that debt is paid, the Father knows.*

He's watched our way and what we sow,
And watched our faith to see it grow;
When we've been wise and when we've not,
The Father knows when we forgot.

*He knows our weakness and our strength,
The trials we bear and about their length,
And how we long for peace and rest
To calm and soothe the aching breast.*

Troubles of earth, both great and small,
The wrongs and pains, He knows them all.
How we wonder what He'll do
In His great wisdom, He knows that, too.

*Looking back, we know that He,
The Lord Almighty, patiently
Directed all the ways of men,
And does today, as well as then.*

And looking ahead to things to be
The God of all can surely see
The time is needed which He bestows
To make us worthy, the Father knows.

*Let us then welcome another year,
Redeem what He gives in godly fear;
Be a true Christian each day as it goes,
It's the one happy life, the Father knows.*

Be gentle and kind, honest and true,
Treat every one as you'd have them treat you;
Let it be genuine, not just a pose,
You shall have life in the end, the Father knows.

—O. E. T.



A flower unblown; a book unread;
A tree with fruit unharvested;
A path untrod; a house whose rooms
Lack yet the heart's divine perfumes;
A landscape whose wide border lies
In silent shade 'neath silent skies;
A casket with its gifts concealed—
A wondrous fountain yet unsealed—
This is the Year that for you waits
Beyond tomorrow's mystic gates.

—Sel.

Meditations

On the Word

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5: 17).

Well, what is wrong with that? It implies, of course, a change; but don't we all like changes? All progress, we know, is continual change, and the true Church of Christ, being a superlatively progressive organization, has never been a champion of the *status quo*. Human nature—character—needs to be changed, and it must be. Existing political and economic conditions need to be changed, and they will be. Yes, it is a change, a radical change, but, strange to say, it is not popular with a novelty-loving world. Or, perhaps it is not so strange. History testifies that every notable change for the better has been won by the efforts of an inspired and energetic few, the apathetic masses being dragged reluctantly, suspiciously, along the rugged road of progress. So with the change upon which we meditate today; it is too revolutionary, too demanding, too laborious to be attractive. The ends are desirable, perhaps, but not the means. Only a chosen few will yoke desire with action.

In the psychology of advertising, the successive reactions to a successful advertisement are listed as attention, interest, self-interest, desire to possess, and finally, action to acquire. The process of conversion is identical in its psychology. The commodity offered is eternal life and happiness. Unless there is interest, self-interest, and an overpowering desire to possess this better life, the necessary action will not be forthcoming. In fact, one might truthfully say that a man's character is a faithful mirror of his desires, at least of the ones which are permitted to dominate. Somewhere along the line there must exist or be awakened a dissatisfaction with the old way of life, for one will not voluntarily forsake a satisfaction.

The old creature, the "old man," must go. He should go, anyway, for he is no good. His description may be found in Mark 7: 21, 22; Romans 1; Gal. 5: 19—21; Col. 3: 5, 8, 9, and elsewhere. In spite of these portrayals, it is not easy to recognize him for what he is, looking through our own untrained eyes. St. Paul, viewing his natural self with clear vision, said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7: 18). Once we have humbled ourselves to make the same admission, there is hope; progress begins at this point.

Even after the die is cast and we have committed ourselves to the task of making this momentous change, we need not expect an easy road to victory. Habit is powerful, and the old nature dies slowly. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed," saith the apostle (Rom. 6: 6). Crucified—a slow, lingering death. Completely changed tastes are absolutely essential, but that, too, is easier said than done. It takes time, so much time that we have none to spare. We cannot afford to postpone action until our tastes are changed; there are many things distasteful to the old nature which must be done because the law of God says so, because the prize depends upon it; we can learn to like

it as we go along. "No man," said Jesus, "having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for, he saith, The old is better" (Luke 5: 39). Flesh and spirit are contrary to each other, and in the grimly serious business of crucifying the flesh we shall often be reminded of Paul's warning, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would."

The deluded followers of emotional religions often testify that at the moment of "conversion" the old life and its appetites dropped away, never to return. Frankly, we don't believe it. No such experience is recorded in sacred history, nor have we ever seen such a thing ourselves. Certainly no conversion was ever more dramatic or convincing than St. Paul's, and no man's surrender more complete; yet his letters reveal a mighty inward struggle against his nature, a warfare which began on the Damascus road and continued to the triumphant end of his career. It is quite possible that certain bad habits and desires might be inhibited and suppressed, even permanently, by an overpowering and continuing interest in another direction; but the complete remaking of a character is quite another thing. It takes time. The amount of time it requires depends upon the degree of our interest and the intensity of our effort, but we will need every day of our probation to take the fort and hold it against the assaults which are sure to come. With each victory comes added strength for the next battle; as Job puts it (17: 9), "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

Old things pass away, but only by our own efforts. Our part of the contract can be fulfilled only by us—no substitution. "If iniquity be in thine hand"—trust in the atoning blood of Jesus? No;—"put it far away" (Job 11: 14). It is well to remember that as far away as we can cast our evil ways, we are never safe from them—from ourselves. Our free moral agency enables us to go out and pick them up whenever we so desire. This change is reversible, and with the vast majority of those who have begun the work, it has been reversed. When Saul was chosen to be king over Israel, his heart was touched, "God gave him another heart," and he became "another man." (I Sam. 10: 6, 9). Not instantaneously, of course, but gradually, as he rose to his responsibilities. But unfortunately he would not and did not continue in that state of newness. The devil in him was only bound, not killed; and before long he slipped back into his old ways, and worse, and his subsequent life was one long tragedy of willfulness and its disastrous consequences.

His namesake, the apostle from Tarsus, knew how easily he could lose himself, even after an illustrious career in the Gospel. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9: 27).

"Behold, all things are become new." The way of Christ is not all negative, not all "Thou shalt not." A picture of the "new man" is found in Gal. 5: 22, 23. His fruits are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." In Col. 3: 11—15 we read a still more detailed description of his virtues. Only such a man will be fit to dwell in the "new heavens and new earth" so beautifully portrayed by the Revelator in chapter 21: 3, 4. The old man would be out of place, even miserable, in such surroundings. Truly the "new wine" is better, regardless of what men may say at the first taste.

"And he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

The Greatest Highway of Life

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. —Jeremiah 6: 16.

Some verses preach without comment. This verse, written some six hundred years before Christ, is so clearly stated that its outline is obvious. It has a message as important today as when it was written.

.....

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see . . .

These opening words assure us that God is interested in His followers. We are warned to examine the different paths and come to a definite conclusion as to which road we take. With a confusion of paths stretching out before us, how can we be sure we are taking the right path? His answer is:

Ask for the old paths . . .

"There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it" (Job 28: 7, 8). This is the path for which we must ask, for which we must seek, and search, and pray. Evil beasts (workers of iniquity) cannot destroy this path. Every aspiring Christian will find this path though he must hew his way to it through the labyrinth of a thousand other paths which are falsely attested to lead to life. Only one way can satisfy the resolute Christian now, only one way provides the promised hundredfold of happiness as we traverse it, and only one way leads to the goal which we seek—life forevermore.

Jesus stood up and looked at all the ways, He made choice of the old path, and He said, "I receive not testimony from man." God revealed Himself in ancient days. Would-be Christians who claim to have found inspiration unknown before cannot be traveling the old path we are

told to ask for. The old-time religion of many men goes back no further than their parents or grandparents; but thoughtful Christians know that any stopping this side of Christ Himself is short of the old path.

Ask for the good way . . .

Not all paths are good. We must not allow tradition to rule us as tyrants. To be sure, some bad paths are well traveled and look attractive at their beginning. Choose the best path even if at first it seems unattractive and rugged. And if, on the journey, feet may bleed and heart may break, press on! Faith! comrade. Better days are ahead.

Walk in the good way . . .

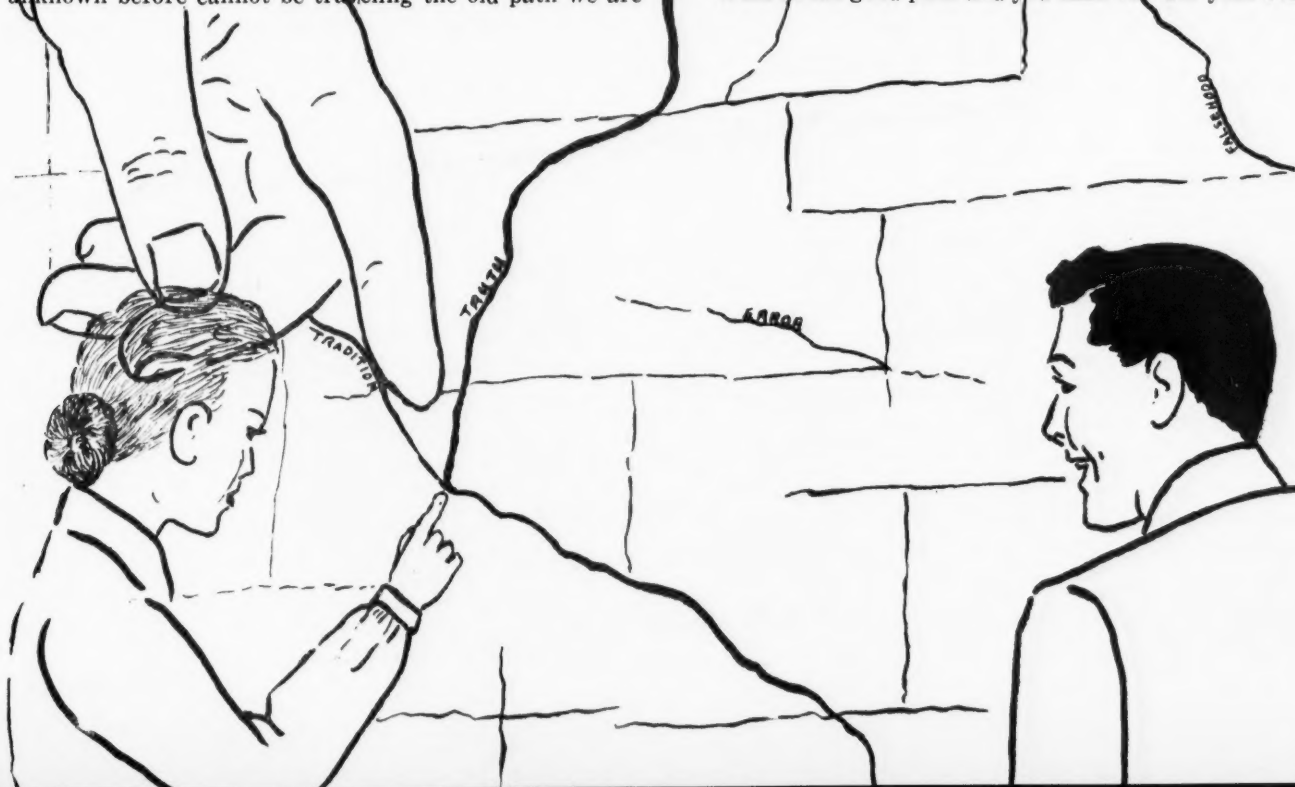
There is always the temptation to believe that we have done something when we have accepted only the theory. To simply talk about faith is by no means an acceptable substitute for living and working by faith.

There is always a time for discussion and debate, but sooner or later we must push out to sea. If we are sincere pilgrims, there is time to study the maps of our journey; but the time comes when we must move forward. Refusing to advance indicates uncertainty of belief. Choose the good road and walk in it.

Ye shall find rest for your souls.

Often the Bible ends its instructions with a promise. The good road may not be the easiest, nor the most pleasurable, but the peace which comes to the sincere traveler is the envy of men on other paths. How much is this peace worth? Kings on the wrong paths have offered in the end to trade whole kingdoms for it. It cannot be bought with material wealth; however it is available to the rich and poor alike.

Walk in the good path and you shall rest for your souls.



“And when they had sung a hymn
they went out”

Matthew xxvi. 30.

*The sun hath gilded Judah's hills with his last gorgeous beam;
Meanwhile the still grey mists arise from Jordan's sacred stream.
The stars, bright flowers of the sky, unfold their beauties now,
And gaze on Salem's marble fane, by Olivet's dark brow.
In David's city sound is hushed and tread of busy feet,
For solemnly his sons have met the paschal lamb to eat.
But list! the silence of the hour is broken; the still air
A melody hath caught which far its viewless pinions bear.
Unwonted sweetness hath the strain, and as its numbers flow,
More tender and more touching yet its harmony doth grow.
Not royal David's tuneful harp such thrilling power had known
To wake deep echoes in the soul, as its scarce earthly tone.
Within an "upper room" are met a small, yet faithful band,
On whom a deep yet chastened grief had laid its softening hand.
Among them there is One who wears a more than mortal mien,
'Tis He on whom in all distress the weary one may lean.
Mysterious sadness on that brow, so pure and calm, doth lie;
And untold stores of deepest love are beaming from His eye.
What wonder if the strain was sweet above all other lays!
Seraphic well might seem the hymn which Jesus' voice did raise.
The angels hush their lyres and bend to hear the thrilling tone,
And heaven is silent—with that song they mingle not their own.
The sorrowing ones around have heard their blessed Master tell,
That He with them no longer now as heretofore may dwell.
And they have sadly shared with Him the last, last evening meal,
And heard the last sweet comfort which their mourning hearts may heal.
They do not know the fearful storm which on His head must burst;
They know not all,—He hath not told His loving ones the worst.
How could He? E'en an angel's mind could never comprehend
The weight of woe, to finish which the Saviour's head must bend;
Ere long the voice, which waketh now such touching melody,
Shall cry, "My God, great God, so soon hast Thou delivered me!"
The hour is come; but ere they meet its terrors,—yet once more
Their voices blend with His who sang as none e'er sang before.
Why do they linger on that note? Why thus the sound prolong?
Ah! 'twas the last! 'Tis ended now, that strangely solemn song.
And forth they go—the song is past; but like the roseleaf, still,
Whose fragrance doth not die away, its soft low echoes thrill
Through many a soul, and there awake new strains of glowing praise
To Him who, on that fateful eve, that last sweet hymn did raise.*

—Sel. and alt.

